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Humanitarian pressure-groups and British attitudes to West Africa, 1895-1915.

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Humanitarian pressure-groups and British attitudes to
West Africa, 1895 - 1915.

By

Kingsley Kenneth Dike NWORAH

A Thesis submitted to the University of London
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, April 1966.



ABSTRACT

The period between 1895 and 1915 was one of remarkable decline in British humanitarian conscience. During these two decades, two divergent attitudes, the predominant racist creed and the patronising condescension of traditional philanthropy, were supplemented by a new school of thought which saw itself as the keeper of true colonial conscience in Britain. Originally conceived by Mary Kingsley as a commercial lobby, this 'Third Party' (as it called itself) was sustained mainly by the humanitarian idealism of John Holt and E. D. Morel.

'Exeter Hall' continued its traditional function as watch-dog for aboriginal rights and pressure-group in Imperial affairs, but its former position of primacy was already undermined not only by the fact that its role and methods were no longer a deposit of popular and official attitudes, but also by the relative ascendancy of the Third Party as the most positive public factor in Imperial thought and policy towards West Africa.

Indeed, during this period, the personality of Morel was synonymous with a reformist movement which saw the native land settlement as the indispensable bulwark of Imperial policy in West Africa. Questioning the Colonial Office method of developing these 'tropical 'estates', the

Third Party advocated Imperial administrative reforms there.

These pressure-group activities are^{also} examined from the stand-point of British Imperial thought, while the West African responses to these public and official attitudes are given their due importance. The ideas and activities of these pressure-groups were not totally out of tune with the intentions of the Colonial Office, but since official policy was threatened by its inherent weaknesses and too expeditious methods, by unwholesome allegiance to personal friendships, party affiliations, and individual commercial adventurism, these humanitarians strove to keep alive the ideal of Imperial Trusteeship.

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SOME ABBREVIATIONS USED

<u>A. F.</u>	-	<u>Aborigines' Friend</u>
<u>A.F. and A.S.R.</u>	-	<u>Aborigines' Friend and Anti-Slavery Reporter</u>
<u>A. M.</u>	-	<u>African Mail</u>
A. P. S.	-	Aborigines' Protection Society
<u>A. S. R.</u>	-	<u>Anti-Slavery Reporter</u>
A.S.A.P.S.	-	Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society
A.S.S.	-	Anti-Slavery Society
C.A.	-	Crown Agents
C/C	-	Chamber of Commerce
C.O.	-	Colonial Office
C.P.	-	Confidential Print
C.R.A.	-	Congo Reform Association
E.D.M.P.	-	E. D. Morel Papers
Encl.	-	Enclosure
F.O.	-	Foreign Office
H.C. Debs.	-	House of Commons Debates
H.L. Debs.	-	House of Lords Debates
J.H.P.	-	John Holt Papers
M.P.	-	Member of Parliament
N.R.C.L.T.U.C.	-	Native Races Conference and Liquor Traffic United Committee
<u>W.A.M.</u>	-	<u>West African Mail</u>

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CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, an Imperialist spirit swept through Britain. Hitherto, the most formative instinct on the thoughts and actions of Englishmen had been the 'national ideal'. Gradually, however, the words 'empire' and 'imperialism' had replaced the daily currency of 'nation' and 'nationality'; power and dominion became more fashionable to the masses than individual liberty and national principles. Men's thoughts were turned more outward than inward; the national ideal gave place to the Imperial.¹

The factors which fostered this transformation can here only be summarized. The 'national ideal' had been nurtured in feelings of superiority, now, Victorian self-confidence was undermined.² Overwhelming international trends correspondingly turned the domestic excitement due to cheap newspapers, manhood suffrage and bouts of economic depression into a more brazen sense of national inferiority.³ The German naval programme threatened the hitherto sedate pose of the

1. W.F. Monypenny, 'The Imperial Idea' in The Empire and the Century (London, 1905) pp. 5-6.
2. A.F. Madden, 'Changing Attitudes and Widening Responsibilities' in The Cambridge History of the British Empire Volume III pp. 339-405. (Cambridge, 1959) P.340.
3. See Elie Halévy, A History of the English People V, (London 1926, 1931) pp. 8-12.

Pax Britannica. Moreover, accentuation of commercial rivalry between the Great Powers was virtually synonymous with this international hostility. On the one hand, the United States, Germany and France, by means of hostile tariffs, State bounties and protection, made nonsense of British Free-Trade policy; on the other hand, even smaller British colonial customers were passing from mere consumers to producers, and therefore rivals. But the rise of a new commercial power, Japan, which bade fair to become a keen rival in the markets of the Far East, meant that Britain should keep pace with new developments.¹ In this effort to stem the tide of commercial embarrassment, imperial motives in West Africa were probably influenced by this global necessity; official policy probably regarded West Africa merely as a factor in its global strategy, as a stop-gap in the imperial scheme for the most threatened Eastern zone.² But these global tentatives never ruled out the possibility of economic gain in West Africa once the imperial commitment was made there.³ The identification of colonial possessions with British greatness and wealth prompted the 'scramble' for Africa⁴, even if the 'scramble' could serve another purpose in the East.

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1. F.D. Lugard, 'New British Markets' in The Nineteenth Century, Sept. 1895 P.442; see also Holt Hallett in The Nineteenth Century, August 1895; Also Halevy, op. cit. Pp. 10-12.
 2. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (London, 1961) passim; also Chaps. I and XIII.
 3. Lady Lugard, 'The Tropics and the Empire' in The Empire and the Century (London, 1905) Pp. 817-34.
 4. E.D. Lugard, in Nineteenth Century Sept. 1895.

Other characteristics gave significance to the commercial ethos of those days. It was a generation of materialism. "An industrial imperialism had succeeded the mercantilist approach earlier in the century: now it was itself being replaced by a financial, 'stock-jobbing', variety".¹ Joint-stock companies were created to exploit territories in Africa, most of them in a manner that was both crude and scandalous.² It was the golden age of the City, which was not only involved in stock-jobbing operations, but also exercised immense influence in the politics of Britain.³ Parliament itself was no less commercialised: the proportion of businessmen in Parliament at this time probably exceeded that of any other preceding epoch.⁴ Men's minds were turned to Africa which was now a new frontier of opportunity.⁵

But 'expansion', 'consolidation' and 'development'

loc.cit.

1. Madden, P.340./ See also A.G. Gardiner, Sir William Harcourt II, Pp. 389, 414, 514: speech made by Harcourt on 8 May 1896; also H.C. Debs. 4S XL, 886.
2. Sidney Olivier, White Capital and Coloured Labour (Leonard and Virginia Woolf, London, 1906, later 1929) Pp. 52-56.
3. For example, Chamberlain's Tariff programme might have met a more auspicious fate were it not for the opposition of 'the City' which 'broke' him. See Halevy, op. cit. pp.10-20.
4. Halevy, op. cit., Pp. 15-16. According to Halevy over 250 members of the 670 M.P.s in 1895 were businessmen or represented business interests.
5. For the general background on Imperialism, see J.A. Hobson, Imperialism: a Study (London, revised 1948); C.A. Bodelson, Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism (London, 1924), A.P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and its Enemies (London, 1959); Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit. also R.C.K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914 (Oxford, 1936).

virtually went together. As Chamberlain was in 1895 emphasising that the Colonies were 'undeveloped estates' which must be developed¹, British arms were forcing their way into Ashanti.² By 1905, however, Lugard was already reducing British policy to a 'dual mandate': the bringing of the native races 'who are centuries behind ourselves in mental evolution' 'to a higher plane of civilization and progress', 'while economically developing the tropics in such a way as to benefit British industrial classes'.³ Viscount Milner was to define this task of 'development or consolidation' which followed the 'epoch of expansion' as 'constructive imperialism' but it must be noted that even the 'development and 'consolidation' meant imperial expansion, though not necessarily territorial.

There was commercial expansion in the export of capital earmarked for this colonial 'development'. In most respects, it involved the raising of loans for colonial railways, the subsidization of shipping companies supposed to serve imperial interests, the establishment in the Colonies and protectorates of local departments of trade and industry geared to the imperial economy which represented great initial

1. H.C. Debs. 4S. Vol. 36, 22 Aug. 1895, 641, 642.

2. J.L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain Vol. 3, 1895-1900 (MacMillan, 1934) Pp. 21-2. Also Henry Birchenough: Nineteenth Century and After March 1902 'Mr Chamberlain as an Empire Builder', Pp. 361-68.

3. F.D. Lugard, 'West Africa' pp.835-60 in The Empire and the Century, (London, 1905), P. 859: See also his later work The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa, (Edinburgh, 1926).

4. Viscount Milner, Constructive Imperialism, (London, 1908) P.57

expenditure.¹ Thus at enormous costs, harbours were constructed and motor-roads built in the Colonies, but railways were the most spectacular feature. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, an astonishing growth took place in colonial railways, almost amounting to an economic revolution.² By the end of the century everyone of the new African colonies could boast a railway, financed mostly by loans with interest from the 'exporter of capital' and 'the banker of the world',³ Thus although these loans served to 'develop' the colonies as well, they were a reflection of the general policy of 'capital export' which was a feature of the period. In 1881, the amount of English capital invested abroad was estimated at £1,250 millions, bringing in an annual interest revenue of £52 millions; in 1915, the investment abroad was £3,805 mill and the income, £200 millions. The share of the Empire in this was roughly half. In 1896, £1,123 millions were invested in the Empire (53%), and in 1915, £1,890 millions, that is about 50% of the whole.⁴ No doubt, the tropical African 'estates' claimed much less than the white colonies. Not

1. Lady Lugard, 'The Tropics and the Empire', pp.817-34 in The Empire and the Century (London, 1905) Pp. 825-6.
2. For the West African illustration of this, see Alan McPhee, Economic Revolution in British West Africa (London, 1926)
3. See S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa, (London, 1938 also L.H. Jenks, The Migration of English Capital (London, 1963). For the British supremacy as exporter of capital see W.L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902, Pp.1, 74. For proper discussion, C.K. Hobson, The Export of Capital (1914); Also Halevy, op.cit. pp. 13-15.
4. See Ralph Fox, The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism (London, 1933) P.34.

much, relatively, was expected immediately from the West Coast of the 'Dark Continent' whose trade was said to be in 'decline'.¹ But the new importance of her minerals, vegetable oils, rubber, timber and cotton probably created a less pessimistic economic image after 1895. More permanent and extensive arrangements were made in the imperial administrative apparatus, particularly in the reorganisation of the colonial machinery which also involved heavy sums. It is reckoned that, whereas the trading balance of all the West African colonies increased almost seven times between 1896 and 1928, the administrative expenses for the same period increased over ten times.²

But this policy of 'development' was severely threatened by a more dynamic and venturesome spirit of 'exploitation' which was a dominant feature of those days.³ As Friedrich Naumann wrote: 'History teaches that the general progress of civilization can be realized only by breaking the national liberty of small people...., that there should be leader nations and others that must be led, and we ought not to wish to be more liberal than history itself'.⁴ And, in reply to the question whether natives had a right to their

1. Sir Charles Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain (London, 1890) vol. 2, P.179. See also Robinson and Gallacher, op.cit. Pp. 379-409.

2. Fox, op.cit., P.31.

3. See J.H. Oldham, Christianity and the Race Problem (London, 1924) Chap. VII, 'Ethics of Empire', esp. pp. 94-95.

4. Quoted in Oldham, op.cit., P.95.

land and property and to an independent development, Dr Paul Rohrbach, one of the leading authorities on German colonial affairs wrote in 1908: "Rights of the natives, which can be recognised only at the cost of holding back the evolution of the white race at any point, simply do not exist. The idea that the Bantu, Negroes, and Hottentots in Africa have a right to live and die after their own fashion, even if multitudes of human beings among civilized peoples of Europe are in consequence forced to continue to live in cramped proletarian conditions, instead of rising to a higher level through the full exploitation of the productive capacity of our colonies.....is absurd."¹

Although it was not totally unchallenged,

1. Paul Rohrbach, Deutsche Kolonial Wirtschaft, P.44; Also Q. in Oldham, P.95.

especially by its 'scientific' opponents¹, the sense of 'progress' which these thoughts reflected had been reinforced in Britain by the Darwinian thesis of organic evolution. Darwin's survival of the fittest was elevated from a biological statement to a social and political precept.² Progress came to be regarded as the product of a grim and fierce struggle for survival. Not the individual but his type therefore mattered in the calculations and impulses of men. 'To yield to feelings of humanity and pity was to attempt to reverse nature's inexorable law that the weak should give place to the strong, and the progress by which weaker peoples were

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1. For example, see Jean Finot, Race Prejudice, (London 1906), (Translated by Florence Wade-Evans); Sir H.H. Johnston, 'The White Man's Place in Africa' pp.937-46 in The Nineteenth Century and After, (June 1904), and also 'The Empire and Anthropology' in The Nineteenth Century and After, (July, 1908).
 2. G.P. Gooch, 'Imperialism' pp. 308-397, in The Heart of the Empire, (London, 1902), P.312.

dispossessed by the stronger or made to subserve to their purposes was regarded as inevitable'.¹ Many people came to the conclusion that considerations of morality were irrelevant in the territorial expansion of dominant races, which was inevitable. The man who succeeded had legitimacy on his side.²

This national 'conceit' probably influenced the form of national hysteria often called Jingoism. According to Hobson, this was 'a malignant form of the old affection of patriotism' which became 'pestilent' as the British masses were 'drunken on empire'. As an 'inverted patriotism whereby the love of one's own nation is transformed into the....fierce craving to destroy the individual members' of another nation, it was nurtured, as Hobson says, in a "quick ebullition of national hate" which was then exploited by the sensational yellow press, the popular music-hall, the political platform, and at times, even the pulpit. Closely connected with inadequate poor education and crowd instincts, jingoism was immediately characterised by mass savage credulity, vicarious brutality, general glorification of war and military procedures contempt for pacific means, and belief in summary methods.³ As this 'full-blooded imperialist psychology' developed, most working-class men, like 'civilised bandits', entertained the

1. See Oldham, op.cit., P.94.

2. See A.F. Wyatt, 'The Ethics of Empire' in Nineteenth Century, April, 1897, P.516.

3. See J.A. Hobson, The Psychology of Jingoism (London, 1901), Pp. 1, 2, and passim; Gooch, 312-27. loc.cit.

feeling that an Englishman was one of the chosen race.¹ A few sane men, like the Bishop of Stepney denied the view that British imperial success was an act of Providence²; but a large portion of the masses saw the acquisition of new markets for British goods, or the annexation of new territories as ordained by God.³ In this spate of mass religion, native races were frankly declared to belong to a lower order of humanity, and therefore had no claim to the ordinary privileges of white men.⁴

Even some influential people, however uncomfortably,⁵ swam on this jingo tide.⁶ Since 'savage peoples' were 'weak', the 'blessed strong' 'shall prey upon' them.⁷ 'The Anglo-Saxon stock', Chamberlain said, was 'infallibly destined to be the predominant force in the history' of the world.⁸ Even the hitherto more cautious Lord Rosebery came to believe that 'our soldiers are braver, our sailors hardier, our captains

1. Fox, *op.cit.*, P.33.

2. Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Stepney, 'The Empire and the Church' pp.167-73 in The Empire and the Century (London, 1905).

3. Hobson, Jingoism, *op.cit.*, *passim*.
loc.cit.

4. Gooch, /Pp. 327-8.

5. R.C.E. Ensor, The Spectator, 3 July 1936 in 'The Evolution of Joseph Chamberlain' says that Chamberlain "had no great respect for his idolators."

6. W.S. Blunt, My Diaries, Pt. I, P.283; Also Ref. in Oldham *op.cit.*, P.96.

7. See C.H. Pearson, National Life and Character (1893); also Benjamin Kidd, Social Evolution (1894) and Houstons Chamberlain, Foundations of the Nineteenth Century (1899)

8. Speech at Toronto, 1887, Foreign and Colonial Speeches. Also J.L.Garvin, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol.2, (MacMillan, 1933) pp.333-7.

skilfuller (sic.), our statesmen wiser than those of other nations'. Cecil Rhodes, a 'personification of Imperialism', voted in the Cape Colony Assembly for the Strap Act, giving the master the right to flog natives. Sir Arthur Hardinge sneered at the anti-slavery faction in Zanzibar. On the continent, the imperial 'distemper' was no less vicarious. Dr Karl Peters, the so-called father of German Imperialism and the founder of German East Africa, revelled in his murders and immoralities in Africa and was treated as a hero until Bebel denounced him in the Reichstag.¹

These attitudes were promoted by the alarming conduct of some of the poets and men of letters, who lent excitement and colour to either imperial 'discouragement or success'.² Thus the Poet Laureate, Austin, eulogised the Jameson Raid, Rudyard Kipling delighted at the 'satisfactory killing' of Boers; while Henley wildly rejoiced at the tardy victory of a large British force over a Boer army one-fifth its size. According to G.P. Gooch, George Meredith, William Watson, and Stephen Phillips, among a few, struck a higher note, but these were few; 'others caused concern among the equally small sane few when they sold their talents for the applause of the market place.'³

loc.cit.
1. See G.P. Gooch, /Pp. 328-330.

loc.cit.
2. Madden, /Pp. 340, 341-2, 348.

loc.cit.
3. Gooch, /Pp. 340.

Also Hobson, Jingoism, passim, J.M. Robertson, Patriotism and Empire (London, 1899) Pp. 52-3.

This conduct bred an element of panic in British and imperial politics, which in turn signalled a corresponding growth of armaments.¹ Consequently, the soaring expenditure of the Unionist Government between 1895 and 1900, for example, broke the hallowed canons of the 'Gladstonian Garrison'.² Some people even began to feel that a certain 'dichotomy' existed between Imperialism and social reform at home.³ As Masterman complained, in those days of 'lust of domination, the stir of battle, the pride in magnitude of Empire, delight in rule over alien nations, commercial aggrandisement, and dissatisfaction with anything short of predominance in the councils of the world', 'programmes of social reform' 'reposed' 'on the dusty shelves or the brains of great statesmen', and were 'occasionally noticed in Parliament or at election times as subject for reproach or peroration'.⁴ 'The stupendous problem of life for millions of over-ridden men, resolved itself into a kind of military pageant, with occasional fighting to lend it dignity'.⁵ Whereas the old national spirit was one of defiance to aggressors, the new jingoism was tainted by the aggressive desire for great and rapid

1. Hobson, Imperialism, op.cit., passim.

2. Francis W. Hirst, 'Imperialism and Finance' pp. 1-117 in Liberalism and Empire (London, 1900) passim.
loc.cit.

3. Madden, P.339.

4. C.F.G. Masterman, 'Realities at Home' in The Heart of the Empire, (London, 1902) pp. 1-7.

5. J.M. Robertson, op.cit., P.53.

gain.¹ Lecky who had particularly condemned 'the egotism of English policy',² later pointed at 'the levity' with which wars were made with 'barbarous' nations and 'how strongly the present commercial policy' was 'stimulating the passion for aggression'.³ This passion was so forbidding that isolated warnings were directed to a state of affairs which by a "'sufficiently evil conjecture of circumstances', 'a Moses of the Music-Hall, with perhaps a few Aarons of the Areopagus', might be enabled 'to start a Jingo crusade in which the nation' 'might march as straight to dire disaster as ever did any host of 'drugged, bemused and bewildered' fanatics in the Dark Ages.....'"⁴

But to emphasise the jingoism of the masses is not to underestimate the anti-jingo forces, many of which were little concerned with imperial affairs or foreign policy. For example, the Home Rulers, the Irish party, the rising Labour and trade union groups, as well as the traditional 'Gladstonian' forces, more concerned with the realities at home, were dourly unimpressed by the jingo hysteria. Even some Fabian and Liberal Imperialists found the jingo 'craze' unacceptable. Thus Bernard Shaw supported imperialism if it

1. The Spectator Oct. 8, 1898 Vol. LXXXI, P.480. 'The New Jingoism'.

2. W.E.H. Lecky, The Empire: Its Value and Its Growth (London, 1893) P.43.

3. Lecky: Map of Life, P.180.

4. See John M. Robertson, Patriotism and Empire (London, 1899) P.55, and *passim*.

meant 'a well-considered policy to be pursued by a common-wealth of communities flying the British Flag', and regarded it as 'a grave symptom of national infatuation' if it was 'a mere catchword vaguely denoting our insular self-conceit'.¹ Lord Curzon who found jingoism synonymous with 'a swaggering attitude or chauvinism', 'megalomania', 'reckless cupidity', 'vanity of racial domination' and 'greed of commercial gain', therefore felt it was opposed to the 'moral basis of imperialism', which he said was 'not merely justice, order, or material prosperity, but the sense of partnership in a great idea, the consecrating influence of a lofty purpose....'². Thus within the broad canvass of British politics, each of the various groups demonstrated its attitude of approval or disapproval to the 'forward' pattern, particularly as the South African War waned³, but the problems of the West African Colonies were, in comparison, barely broached.

Much of the colonial crisis there as in other tropical belts of Africa, was shrouded from public view by a 'soporific illusion' which kept the British conscience complacently unaware of what was going on there. This illusion was the then current idea of taking up the White Man's

1. G.B. Shaw: Fabianism and the Empire (London, 1900) P.1.

2. Lord Curzon, 'The New Imperialism' in The Nineteenth Century and After, Jan. 1908, Pp. 159-160.
loc.cit.

3. See Madden, /pp. 345-51, which is a masterly survey.

Burden.¹ This doctrine was as much the outcome of the new imperial situation as a continuation of traditional British attitudes to Africa. Although there were now new excitements and greater contacts, British thinking of Africa had not totally changed from the pessimism of the 'White Man's Grave', which had posed the problem of survival to European adventurers. Although a revolution in the study of tropical medicine had reduced mortalities and modified this attitude, the image of barbarism persisted. The sensational impressions of earlier travellers to Africa, the later dominant racism which 'destroyed the intellectual foundations of racial egalitarianism', and the missionary propaganda, all helped to create this European image of Africa. But the missionary aspect needs to be emphasised. Much of the argument in popular missionary publications had tended 'to demonstrate the overwhelming need for missionary work'. Although they talked of an ultimate racial equality of all men, they also uttered 'the worst aspects of cultural chauvinism', 'The darker the picture of African barbarism, the more necessary the work of the missionaries'. 'They consciously chose to report on those aspects of African culture most likely to be shocking to their readers'. As Professor Curtin says:

1. Olivier, *op.cit.*, Pp. 56-7.

"It is hard to escape the conclusion that the systematic misrepresentation of African culture in the missionary press contributed unintentionally to the rise of racial as well as cultural arrogance....."¹

Like the missionaries, the New Imperialism also magnified African barbarism in order to justify its sway. It also claimed the virtues of early humanitarian conscience. William Wilberforce had harped on 'the humanity, justice and the duties of Christian men' to help 'open the way to an eternal futurity of happiness', among aboriginal populations.² Now, in the 1890's, Rudyard Kipling gave the imperial challenge its own 'evangelical turn' when he bade young Britons to take up the 'White Man's Burden'.³ According to this 'humanitarian' attitude: Tropical countries were not suited for settled habitation by whites. Europeans could not work in their climate or rear their children there. The native could prosper and labour under good government, but was incapable of developing his own country's resources. He was barbarian, benighted,

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1. For these views, see Philip D. Curtin, The Image of Africa (Wisconsin, 1964) P. 176, 197, 363 - 87; also pp. 479 - 80.
 2. William Wilberforce, The African Slave Trade and its Remedy (1839), (2nd Ed. 1840) pp. 528-9; See also An Appeal to Religion, Justice and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, In behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies, (1823) pp. 32-33.
 3. See W.M. MacMillan, The Road to Self-Rule, A Study in Colonial Evolution, (London, Faber, 1959) P.166.

and unprogressive. One of the principal reasons for this arrested development was that his livelihood had been made so easy for him by natural conditions that he had not been obliged to work, at any rate, not to work steadily and in a proper and efficient manner. The European, therefore, must in the interest of human progress, make arrangements to enable and induce the blackman to work productively under his direction and training. To him the economic profit, which the blackman could not either create or wisely use; to the blackman peace and protection, relief from disease and famine, moral and social improvement and elevations and the blessings of European culture in general. To effect these uplifting developments was the "White Man's Burden".¹ Shorn of its spurious humanitarianism, however, this doctrine was not very different, in its **practical** application, **from** the prevalent racism of those days.

1. See Rudyard Kipling, The Control of the Tropics, (1898) and The Government of Tropical Dependencies, passim. Also. Q. in Olivier, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

Thus as the men of the New Imperialism looked round the Empire and observed the "unharvested El Dorados", only few were inclined to ask what was "the real root of our title to some of these undeveloped estates".¹ It is with some of these few vis-à-vis the public and official attitudes that this thesis deals.

1. J. Saxon Mills, The Future of the Empire (London, 1918) P.70.

CHAPTER II
THE "THIRD PARTY" AND IMPERIAL TRUSTEESHIP

The period of imperial expansion which was signalled by the arrival of Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office was, therefore, one of divergent attitudes towards colonial peoples. The general belief, as bravely advertised in the popular press, was of the "damned nature" of the African negro. This major school believed that the greatest curse of Africa, and the greatest obstacle to its progress, was the "unspeakable" and "unconquerable" aversion to regular work in the African. Therefore, any attempt to place this "lazy" and "useless" creature on an equality with the white man was doomed to miserable failure.¹ At the other extreme, was the traditional philanthropist and missionary school which sought to lift the negro up in the plain of civilization by divesting him of his natural habits and mores. Conceiving its role from an Olympian height of European civilization, this school treated Africans with a spirit of patronising

1. Leo Weinthal to E.D. Morel, 1 Sept. 1904, F9/T-Z, E.D. Morel Papers. Weinthal was a South African and Editor of the African World who published a lot of racist matter in that press. By 22 April, 1908 he had fallen out with E.D. Morel on racial arguments. He was the author of My Story of the Cape to Cairo Road, Rail and River Scheme (4 vols.) (London, 1923).

condescension.¹ There was, however, a small but perceptible growth of a school which identified itself with the development of a true colonial conscience in Britain. It was a school which saw the administration of the negroid races of Africa as a challenging problem of cosmic importance, demanding of justice and wisdom, but above all an appreciation of ethnological facts. This school called itself "The Third Party",² and although several other influences operated under its banner, it was mainly apotheosized in the ideals of Mary Kingsley, John Holt, and E.D. Morel.

The Third Party believed that the West African was besieged by the two other enemy schools whose attitudes it opposed. The more positive and assertive racist school advertized the inferiority and incapacity of the West African, objected to his being a land-owner, and preached the creed that West African wealth belonged to the white race while the African was to remain a perpetual labourer and wage-earner. Strangely enough, however, some educated and semi-educated Africans were also alleged to belong to this inimical

1. E.D. Morel, Nigeria: Its Peoples and Its problems (London 1911), P. xi

The Philanthropist and Missionary School would not have accepted this accusation. See Chaps. 2 and 3 for the attitude of traditional humanitarians.

2. This term seems to have been coined by Morel. Vide E.D. Morel, Nigeria, Pp. X - XIX.

category. It was held that since they were perverted by the unsuitable educational methods of Europe, they lacked racial polarity and national pride, and betrayed the true interests of their country to its foes. The second undesirable school, the Third Party alleged, was to be found in the missionary and philanthropist alliance. It was recognised that their aims and desire were generous to the African, but that their approach had unconsciously done cruel wrongs to him.

The Third Party, therefore, posed between these two schools of thought and practice, the "damned nigger school, and the denationalizing school".¹ It called on all having relations with West Africa to take note of the existing and traditional systems there. It desired that the West African should continue to be a land-owner with security of tenure, an agriculturist and trader, under British rule. It advocated an increased study of West Africa, and demanded that time should be allowed for the gradual development from within there, deprecating the swift and immediate introduction of European norms and formulae which not only dislocated the African polity but also made hybrids of its inhabitants. As the publicist of this school later

1. Morel's words, Ibid, P. xlii.

summarized its maxims:

"It was a school of thought which saw in the preservation of the West African Land for him and his descendants, in a system of education which shall not anelicise, in technical instruction; in assisting and encouraging agriculture, local industries and scientific forestry; in introducing labour-saving appliances, and in strengthening all that is best, materially and spiritually, in aboriginal institutions, the highest duties of our Imperial rule....." 1

Although Morel reduced the general premise of his school to a doctrinal thesis of trusteeship, it was a programme which had been adumbrated by Mary Kingsley and which John Holt believed in. Mary Kingsley plucked the chords of negrophilism in the hearts of Holt and Morel; and Holt had acknowledged that without the inspiration of Mary Kingsley, he might never have shown the degree of interest which he did to West Africans.² A biographical appreciation of this woman is hardly relevant to this work;³ a sound assessment of the position of the negro which is

1. Ibid, Pp. xiii - xiv.

2. John Holt to Morel, 9 Nov. 1911, F.8/4, E.D.Morel Papers.

3. Several biographies of this woman have appeared. See Stephen Gwynn, The Life of Mary Kingsley (MacMillan, 1932); Cecil Howard, Mary Kingsley, (London, 1957); Olwen Campbell, Mary Kingsley, Methuen, 1957.

central in her anthropology has been made.¹ Within a general assessment here will be found a detailed exposition of her aims, her political activities and her relationship with groups and personalities who mattered to her.

The figure of this daring woman with masculine energy² was perplexing both to her contemporaries and later historians.³ But her ability was never in doubt. She dealt with great issues of imperial significance from an almost inspired⁴ insight of a sympathetic, sincere and generous mind. This quality was akin to what Hancock called her virtues of "attachment, justice, and span" "which distinguish the great historian from the crowd of journeymen"⁵. She was intrepid, but her audacious spirit probably led to some crudities in her statements. She did not possess the ability for formulating theories, but having tried, from her reading, contacts and travels, to see the African society and mind from within, she then attempted to correct the erroneous views held about Africans at the time.

1. J.E. Flint, 'Mary Kingsley - A Reassessment', in Journal of African History, IV, 1 (1963), pp. 95 - 104.

2. DNB.

3. J.E. Flint, op. cit. P. 95.

4. R.S. Rattray, Ashanti (Oxford, 1923), P. 81.

5. Sir Keith Hancock, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, vol. 11, Problems of Economic Policy, 1918 - 39 Part 2 (Oxford, 1942) P. 330.

In distributing responsibility for the then prevailing notions about Africa, she blamed the early merchants, and Government officials; but she believed that missionaries were most culpable. The traders' contribution to the evil was negative: they failed to tell all they knew about the West Coast, keeping all available information to themselves.¹ The error of the earlier Government officials, according to her, arose from the conditions that surrounded them in West Africa, and the nature of their restricted influence, distrusted by the trading community since the 1865 Committee, precariously provided with men and money, and badly quartered. The unhealthy climate, and the then short-sighted administration made for lack of continuity of service. Colonial officials, therefore, came back to England embittered, and found an outlet in supporting racist views, which Kingsley believed, did not cause their loss of opportunity overseas.² But she believed that, of all, it was the philanthropist and missionary alliance which most fostered the view of the debased African, harping as they did, on horrors and general sensationalism which so sharply differentiated from the tenor of "classical" missionary

1. Mary Kingsley, West African Studies, (London, 1899)
Pp. 315 - 6.

2. Ibid. Pp. 317 - 9.

reports.¹ All of them were supported by the apathy of the English public which loved to hear horrible stories.² To her, the picture painted of the African by the majority of West African mission reports was that of "a child, naturally innocent, led away and cheated by white traders and grievously oppressed by his own rulers."³ This pious propaganda, she claimed, led ~~the~~ the Government into a policy of destroying native states and the power of the African ruling classes at large through predatory wars.⁴ She believed that the destruction of West African institutions merely lowered the morale of the African race, stopped its trade and endangered its cultural advantages.⁵ It is, however, not so much this destructive imperialism that Kingsley objected to, as the lack of constructive statesmanship and machinery to rebuild the wreck.⁶ It was this obsession that led her to the various political schemes she formulated. Her opposition to the Crown Colony system of administration for West Africa stemmed from these consider-

1. Ibid. Pp. 320 - 1.

2. Ibid. P. 321.

3. Ibid. P. 322.

4. Ibid. P. 322.

5. Ibid. Pp. 378 - 9.

6. Ibid.

ations: that it was anachronistic, autocratic, expensive in men and money, caused wars and consequently retrogression in trade, and could never produce the desired constructive statesmanship.

From 1895 till 1900, therefore, Mary Kingsley was the symbol of dissent in imperial methods for West Africa; In spite of her humanitarian zeal, however, she was "the intellectual and philosophical spokeswoman for the British traders to West Africa".¹ It was this partisanship for British traders which seemed to have dominated her; but it is safe to conclude that she believed in the traders because she thought that they were most qualified (by virtue of experience, justice and humanity) to rule West Africa to the African and imperial advantage. She liked and associated with Goldie, de Cardi, and John Harford, mainly because of their administrative and commercial success and knowledge of the coast.² But she was most at home with John Holt with whom she opposed the Colonial Office methods of administering the West African colonies. This relationship between Kingsley and Holt, a relationship of perpetual, inspirational and mutual education, has been preserved in

1. Flint, op. cit. P. 96.

2. John Harford first opened the Qua-Ibo River after McEachen had traded there in a hulk. No trade seemed to have been done there by white men when McEachen withdrew in 1873 until Harford went in. de Cardi possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the natives of the Niger Delta through personal acquaintance. It is, however, doubted whether he was really a Count.

excellent documentation,¹ which tangibly portrays their views and activities in relation to several contemporary issues. While Kingsley inspired Holt to a more intense negrophilism; it was often from Holt that she sought information on some aspects of West Africa which her own huge experience could not compass.

This fact, therefore, is a credit to John Holt. In assessing the career of John Holt, the mercantile activity is necessarily pre-eminent.² But humanity, not commerce, was the raison d'etre of his existence. He was a trader to West Africa, "and had quietly done in the best way known to him, whatever work came his way..... As a trader, he had worked hard and tried to keep pace with others in enterprise and pushfulness in the establishment of the fabric of British commerce in West Africa, and in developing without fuss and ostentation, the resources of Southern Nigeria."³ A glance

1. John Holt Papers, in the archives of John Holt and Co. Ltd., in India Buildings, Water Street, Liverpool.
2. See Cherry Getzel, John Holt, a British Trader in West Africa in the era of Imperialism, (Unpublished Oxford D. Phil. thesis 1964.), for the mercantile activities of Holt.
3. John Holt to E.D. Morel, 22 Oct. 1903., F8/1, EDMP. Holt's connection with West Africa was so close that some uninformed people assumed that he had originated the trade in palm oil, mahogany or rubber, which was not true.

at his diary¹ shows that Holt was a pioneer. Morally stern and an uncompromising fighter against injustice and the exploitation of human misery, he at the same time disliked publicity, though when occasions demanded it, as during the Congo question, he was ready to dance to the conventional tune. Apparently harsh and brusque, his harshness seemed at times to be a veneer because he was at the same time kind, in any case, he was brought up in the hard "Coast" way. He had the audacity to voice his convictions without caring whose ox was gored. The diplomatic trimmings of such friends as Dr Edward Blyden², bored and incommoded him.³ He had a masterly grip of the social, political and economic problems of West Africa, and offered his knowledge to Governments and individuals. A woman who knew him very well summarized his humane career so vividly:

"His intense individuality, his resentment of

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1. C.R. Holt, The Diary of John Holt and the Voyage of the 'Maria', (Liverpool, 1948.)
 2. For the career of Dr Blyden, see H.R. Lynch, Edward W. Blyden, 1832 - 1912, and Pan-negro Nationalism, (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis 1964). Also by the same author, 'Edward W. Blyden: 'Pioneer West African Nationalist' in Journal of African History, V. 3 (1965) pp. 373 - 388.
 3. Holt to Morel, 3 Oct. 1906, F.8/3, EDMP.
In this letter, Holt says: "Dr Blyden's sincerity does not commend itself to me. To Lugard he can express regret at his departure. To you he can confess that it is well that Lugard is going. This is, I suppose, diplomatic, but it is not to my liking. If I object to a thing I say so or keep silent."

control, his scorn of assistance, made him repudiate any interference, whether by companies or by the State. He wanted no backing either of politicians or of soldier. He had absolute confidence in his own methods of dealing with the African apart from all government complications - such a merchant as John Holt, far-sighted, self-reliant, guided by an unflinching instinct for good business, was never lured by the pleasure of quick profits to the exploitation of the native. He was pledged, if only by his sense of successful commerce, to a system of free labour for the inhabitants of the country....." 1

It was, however, Holt's broad-mindedness which reinforced this individuality and which also was a background to his negrophilism. This quality produced in him that belief in fair, honest and just treatment of men, his condemnation of bad laws, and was the genesis of his free-trade zeal. He sought to right the wrongs believed to have been done to West Africans, and his actions were duly appreciated by West Africans. He was on excellent terms with most enlightened West Africans. Dr Mojola Agbebi

1. Mrs A. Stopford Green, "A Founder of the Society" in Journal of the African Society, October, 1915.

gave him his portrait and was respectfully frank with him.¹ R.B. Blaize, the Lagos merchant, was ever in praise of him, and in 1900 assured him that "we on the Coast are not ignorant of the silent work which you are doing for the benefit of our country and race," and then acclaimed Holt's desire for "the people of the West Coast to be honestly, fairly and intelligently treated by the Government"² Other Coasters benefitted from or hopefully solicited his humanitarianism. In 1906 and 1909, Holt's financial favour was sought and received by Dr Obasa of Ikijah³ in a project for a Girls' School to be built in Lagos. Two years later, he gave one hundred pounds for a technical school at Ibadan. He was approached by Bishop James Johnson for financial help in the proposed Native Christian Church.⁴ Other individuals or even missionaries whom he

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1. Mojola Agbebi to Holt, 2 April 1902, BOX22/1, John Holt Papers. Agbebi, Dr Mojola, Born 10 April 1860 at Ilesha, Nigeria, third son of George Vincent Agbebi, and Peggy Vincent (nee Pearse); Poet and man of letters; Joined and broke with various religious sects in Lagos for one reason or another. Edited for some time, The Lagos Observer, The Lagos Weekly Record, and Iwe Irohin Eko; Died May 1917
 2. R.B. Blaize to Holt, 8 Aug. 1900, Box 22/1, JHP. Richard Beale Blaize was a financier, and philanthropist of Lagos. Edited The Lagos Times.
 3. Dr Obasa of Ikijah to Holt 15 Dec. 1906 22/3, JHP. Obasa of Ikijah to Holt 14 Aug. 1909 22/3, JHP. Dr Orishadipe Obasa of Ikijah, Lagos. 1863 - 1940. M.R.C.S. (England), L.R.C.P. (London).
 4. Bishop James Johnson to Holt, 18 Feb. 1909. 22/3, JHP.

did not trust, acknowledged his kindness to Africans. In 1896, he had given a bell to the Church at Bonny at the instance of the fourth anniversary celebration of the Delta Pastorate Institution,¹ in 1909, the C.M.S. Secretary thanked Holt for his offer to ship a Mission House in the Niger Territory to Patani free of cost.² A few years later Chief Egbu of Warri thanked Holt for a steamer ship. Writing in 'Pidgin' English, Chief Egbu acknowledged Holt as "one who likes Black-man."³

In his transactions, therefore, Holt was always full of gratitude to West Africans who had built up the fabric of his trade. This sense of obligation reinforced his natural disapproval of injustice: "They made me what I am; their labour, their muscles, their enterprise, have given me everything I possess. I am bound to try and protect them against outrage and injustice."⁴ In this spirit, even when his commercial instincts might have

1. D.C. Crowther to Holt, 13 May 1896. 22/2 JHP.

2. C.M.S. Secretary to Holt, 30 Aug. 1909; 22/2 JHP.

3. Chief Egbu to Holt, 7 Oct. 1912, 22/2 JHP.

4. John Holt in the African Mail, 2 July, 1915.

mastered his humanitarian side,¹ Holt tenaciously tried to discharge his debt to those who had laid the foundations of his prosperity.

He shared this sense of duty and obligation to West Africans with Kingsley: the former for his economic success; the latter for her anthropological achievements. This mutuality of interest enables the historian to expose their attitudes to the imperial issues of their time, their political ideals and economic principles. They were both imperialists, but more in the sense of longing "for patience, honesty, and a just recognition of human rights amongst the people we govern, no matter what their colour, intelligence or degree of natural mental evolution."² In striving to present what they considered to be the proper attitude to West Africa, they condemned the British press for ignorance of West African affairs; but they were most bitter towards

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1. Holt to Morel, 26 April 1911, F8/4, EDMP.
In this letter Holt criticises the appointment by his son of a certain Major Leonard as agent of his company at Gabon because he ~~was~~ incompetent; but Holt makes the important point that "the purpose for which our Company exists must always be kept in view by those who are running it apart from all philanthropy or sentiment."
 2. Holt to Morel, 20 June 1900, F8/1, EDMP.

the Times for its alleged invincible ignorance.¹ Both supported the Liquor traffic to West Africa because, as they said, the liquor sent out was neither poisonous nor demoralising.² They hated the introduction of coinage to West Africa and wanted the barter system of trade to continue.³ They saw the Sierra Leone Hut-Tax crisis as the result of Colonial office ignorance and incompetence, and Chamberlain's obstinacy, or at least that of the officials who misled him.⁴ They criticized the administration of West Africa as wasteful and saw direct taxation as a threat to peace.⁵ Holt disliked the "craze" for 'development', especially the then current mania for railway construction, except when they were built economically

1. Kingsley to Holt, 21 Feb. 1898, 16/4 JHP.
Apart from Chirol whom she says "understands Germany and Japan" and is therefore the best man in the Times, all other editors and chief contributors - starting from Russell Wallace, Major Darwin (who wrote the West African articles though an arm-chair geographer) to Kellet of the Royal Geographical Society - are, to her ignorant and amusing "Like the Diplomatic Service the Times knows nothing about West Africa", Kingsley declared.
2. Kingsley to Holt, 27 Nov. 1897, 16/1, JHP. See Chap.II
3. Kingsley to Holt, 2 Feb. 1898, 16/1, JHP.
This attitude is further illustrated in Chap. VII.
4. See Appendix.
They would seem to have agreed with Bentham who in 1831 pleaded that Britain should cease "to regard the colonies with the greedy eyes of fiscality."
5. Holt to Morel, 23 Aug. 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

or made to pay their way.¹ Kingsley, however, did not condemn railways generally, but there seemed to have been no particular railway route she supported.² They wanted to destroy the present Colonial Office System in order, as they alleged, to save the West African Colonies from political instability, economic ruin and social misery.³ In the campaign to evolve a new system of West African administration, Kingsley had the initiative, and tried to implicate Holt in her political designs.

The political ambitions of Mary Kingsley, as already indicated, were mixed up with her primary desire to give British traders to West Africa, particularly the Liverpool men, a determining voice in West African colonial affairs. The school which she founded, although its humanitarianism was later deepened with new influences, was really intended to be a trader's lobby. She could not tolerate the existing system because it "maddens me to see you men who know being ousted from power by sentimentalists - clerical collars and ostrich plumes."⁴ Her aim was "to

1. Holt to Morel, 13 June 1910, F8/4, EDMP. See Chap. VII

2. The correspondence between Kingsley and Holt clearly shows this attitude which will be further explained in Chap. VII. See Kingsley to Holt, 21 Sept. 1898, 16/2, JHP.

3. Kingsley, Studies, P. 324.

4. Kingsley to Holt, 3 March, 1898, 16/1, JHP.

form a Liverpool School of Politics for controlling West African Législation, as firmly as the Manchester School did"; the only difference being that whereas "the Liverpool School would, if formed, be permanent, because Liverpool knows Africa personally", and "has that grasp of the necessary confliction of interests as well as knowledge of detail and working methods", "Manchester only knew itself".¹ She was angry that Liverpool men persisted "in leaving West African administration in the hands of men who are amateurs at it."² Her pessimism about the future of West Africa was sadly deepened by the notion that the officials in the Colonial Office had complete control of its local administration, and "all the healthy, quiet development the traders built the foundations of is being destroyed by the conceited fools."³ She felt that the system which Chamberlain was running would never reap political success because his methods were too expensive in men and money.⁴ The problem of administering West Africa, according to her, could only be solved "by handing over the control of government finances there into the hands of a sort of House of

1. Kingsley to Holt, 19 March 1898, 16/1, JHP.

2. Kingsley to Holt, 21 March 1898, 16/1, JHP.

3. Kingsley to Holt, 21 April 1898, 16/2, JHP.

4. Kingsley to Holt, 26 April, 1898, 16/2, JHP.

Commons, that House of Commons to be composed of the traders at present working the West African trade, (and) this means organising the traders."¹

Thus dissatisfied with the state of affairs in which, according to her, on the evidence of Sandford Arthur Strong, the Librarian of the House of Commons, even Cabinet ministers were said to be incapable of making their own speeches without help, Kingsley advised Holt to "come out and fight."² Conceiving the West African Empire and its traders' position as a sort of German Confederation with a difficult problem of unity and leadership, she tried to unite the traders under a leadership. She suggested the plan to Holt:

"We want a Moltke and Bismarck to unite the excellent good stuff - Jones, Goldie and the West African Chiefs. I invite you to be Bismarck, I'll do my best as Moltke; we have got our sound stuff, English common sense, which will do for Wilhem." ³

Holt liked German methods of administration, but even at that, he was appalled by this facetious German allusion; no wonder he demurred.⁴

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1. Kingsley to Holt, 26 April, 1898, 16/2, JHP.
for details of Kingsley's scheme vide the Studies
pp. 392 - 419.
 2. Kingsley to Holt, 29 Jan. 1899, 16/3, JHP.
 3. Kingsley to Holt, 8 Nov. 1898, 16/3, JHP.
 4. Ibid.

Therefore, Mary Kingsley went out in search of individuals and Members of Parliament who would wish to be connected with traders. She met Sir Alfred Lyall,¹ a Liberal Unionist and die-hard free-trader who was anxious to enter Parliament. Lyall, however, was "not keen to leave £1,200 job for his seat on India Council;" and at any rate, he felt that traders "don't care about anything but local interests or some passing thing of the hour."² Then she came into contact with Sir Spencer Walpole³, "a priest at free trade," a former Governor of the Isle of Man, and Secretary to the General Post Office. Kingsley claimed that he was "a mature man of business and affairs, and a good speaker who could be relied on to go for the government like a fox-terrier a rat."⁴ She also spotted

1. Lyall, Rt. Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn, K.C.B. cv. 1881, Hon. D.C.L., Oxford & LL.D. (Cambridge); Born 4 Jan. 1835, son of Rev. Alfred Lyall; Educ. at Eton; of Bengal Civil Service; Lt. Gov., N.W. Provinces, India 1882 - 87; Member of Council of Secretary of State for India, 1882-1902; P.C. 1902; Ford's Lecturer in English History, Oxford Union 1907; Publications: British Dominion in India; Life of Warren Hastings 1902; Life of Marquiss of Dufferin; 1905. Died 10 April, 1911.

2. Kingsley to Holt, 2 Dec. 1898, 16/3, JHP.

3. Walpole, Sir Spencer, K.C.B. cv. 1898; Born 6 Feb. 1839, eldest son of Rt. Hon. Spencer H. Walpole; Educ. at Eton; Clerk in the War Office, 1858; Inspector of Fisheries, 1867; Lt. Gov. of the Isle of Man, 1882; Sec. to the Post Office, 1893 - 99; Hon. D.L. Oxford and LL.D. Edinburgh, Published biographical works; Died 7 July, 1907

4. Kingsley to Holt, 2 Dec. 1898, 16/3, JHP.

and tried to engage Charles Strachey¹, who though a unionist, was a free-trader, and "a most noble man with great influence and ability, looked on here as one of the most coming Statesmen." However, although she recognised that Strachey's association with the Spectator might be an asset, and although he was "an active intensively vivid man," Mary Kingsley regretted his lack of depth, charm and great learning. But she was confident that "he is just an extremely useful man and ambitious." As Chamberlain's confidant, Kingsley believed that Strachey "had great power with him since he is not afraid of him" because "Strachey thinks he could do it just as well."² She exhorted Holt to continue to see members of Parliament, in particular Maclean³, Conservative member for Cardiff, who, according to her, had been asked

1. Strachey, (Sir) Charles, K.C.M.G. Cr. 1926, C.B. 1920; Born 1862; 3rd son of Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I.; married 1893 Margaret (d. 1925) daughter of Sir Walter Raleigh; Educ. at King's Coll, Cambridge; worked in F.O. 1885-99; 1900 - Col. Office; 1906, Principal Clerk West Afric., Dept; 1909 Principal Clerk, Niger Dept.; 1913-14 Travelled in West Africa; 1919 represented the C.O. at the Peace Conference; 1924-7 Asst. Under Sec. of State for Colonies. Club: Union. Died 15 March, 1942.
2. Kingsley to Holt, 2 Dec. 1898, 16/3, JHP.
3. Maclean, James Mackenzie, Born 13 Aug. 1835, son of Alexander Maclean; Editor of the Newcastle Chronicle, 1855-58; Leader-writer Manchester Guardian, 1858-59; Editor and proprietor Bombay Gazette, 1859-79; part proprietor and London contributor Western Mail, Cardiff to 1900; President of the Institute of Journalists, 1897 - 98; Conservative M.P. for Oldham, 1885-92, first Conservative M.P. for Cardiff for 40 yrs; seconded address to Crown in House of Commons, 1886; Conservative M.P. for Cardiff 1895-1900, Died 22 April 1906.

by the Carlton Club to "chaperon" Winston Churchill for Parliament. She does not seem to have placed too much confidence in the young Churchill's ability and humanitarianism "because he is no doubt full of foolishness"; but might watch out for him because he is "full of go", and "will like his father make the fur fly."¹ Having, therefore, received only limited acquiescence from Liverpool and Manchester in her one-time plan of forming an Advisory Council or a sort of House of Commons for commercial men, Mary Kingsley turned her attention "to forming a parliamentary Party that you and me can more or less manage."²

The arrangement of this parliamentary Party was, however, not easy because the elements in the Parliamentary opposition, although they did not always see eye to eye with much of the Government methods, were not enthusiastic to commit themselves to the cause of commerce, however enlightened. Having failed to rally spontaneous response from individuals and to organise a parliamentary party, Kingsley was then inclined to mass propaganda - publishing in the press and lecturing at strategic platforms in the country. She explained the plan and the difficulty of parliamentary solidarity to Holt:

"What I should like to see would be a political

1. Kingsley to Holt, 10 May 1899, 16/4, JHP.

2. Kingsley to Holt, 10 May 1899, 16/4, JHP.

propoganda throughout all the manufacturing districts so that the members of Parliament sent up by those districts would be really representative of the English commercial power, and a party capable of representing it in the House properly; meanwhile the government should lose its bye-elections. How this is to be engineered is difficult to see when the opposition is such a trashy and flabby set....." 1.

also it does not appear that the allegiance of her "faithfull Noncomformists" on whom she had rested her electoral hope because "they are a big voting body"², had been steady enough to guarantee any tangible result especially as she embarrassed her friends by championing the cause of liquor traders.

Kingsley's plans failed for several reasons. As already indicated, members of Parliament were not generally keen on committing their careers to vague mercantile interests. When members were committed to commerce, it was not to a vague and pedantic scheme of traders' welfare, but to specific and individual industries and corporations. Even among the traders themselves lack of unity and initiative prevailed.

1. Kingsley to Holt, 28 July, 1899, 16/4, JHP.

2. Kingsley to Holt, 28 April 1898, 16/2, JHP.

Although they had by 1892 begun to come together, away from the fierce rivalry of old, they still lacked qualities of lasting partnership¹ which further served to put them at the mercy of the Colonial Office.² As Kingsley complained, even "Liverpool men will trust no man outside their own set."³ This lack of leadership and unity among the merchants themselves not only gave Chamberlain and his aides the opportunity of using their ability to overshadow her proposals, but also did not inspire the bulk of the commercial men in parliament to rally to her banner.

On the other hand, the species of reforms and schemes which Kingsley put forward, however brilliant, might have appeared to many people as bizarre and out-dated. "She was attempting to recreate and fossilize the conditions of the 1880s, when government was rudimentary, and the traders untrammelled by taxation, regulations, and official control."⁴ To transform the conditions of the 'informal' empire into a systematic administrative expedient with parliamentary sanction and legal validity had little if any merit in the era of jingoism. It might be plausible to argue that men who knew so much of West Africa and had

1. Kingsley to Holt, 30 July 1899, 16/4, JHP.

2. Kingsley to Holt, 17 Aug. 1899, 16/4, JHP.

3. Kingsley to Holt, 28 Aug. 1899, 16/4, JHP.

4. Flint, 'A Reassessment', op. cit. P. 104.

contributed so much to its development ought to be given some voice in its administration. As will be seen later they were given an opportunity to air their views on Colonial administration. But it must be emphasized that such a scheme as drawn up by Mary Kingsley, however innocently conceived, might have been equivalent to ultimately granting self-government to merchants having connexions with Africa. As a reactionary and conservative, Kingsley stubbornly supported the traders because she believed that they shared her ideals. As will be seen later, it could be proved that some of these ideals were forward-looking,¹ but they failed to fire the imaginations of men of the New Imperialism. It was an era of dynamic changes which, though strong in tradition, was not marked by traditionalists of the Kingsley stamp. Chamberlain and his active colonial officials represented the temper of the age. Mary Kingsley led a school of disheartened Gladstonians.

These efforts to provide what was believed to be the best government for West Africans made closer the candid relationship between Holt and Kingsley. Sometimes, however, Holt felt that Kingsley had fallen under the spell of Goldie. Others, on the other hand imagined that she was really fascinated by A.L. Jones. It was, however,

1. See Chap. VII.

Holt himself and possibly Sir Robert Jefferies, sometime statistical expert at the Board of Trade, who more powerfully swayed her opinions than Goldie and Jones ever did. Moreover, the educated Africans liked Holt so much that they propagated the view that it was Holt who converted Kingsley to a recognition of African rights, a point of view which did not take into account what Kingsley called "a lot of original sin in me that makes me give little credit to any of my jujus."¹ After her death, Holt acknowledged her influence over him: she was a "noble woman" "the dear woman"² who was "my spiritual mother."³ He confessed her wonderful influence in "getting us to think on right lines and to work for the good of the African peoples."⁴ It will be absurd to dismiss all this as mere sentimental and emotional effusions. And Holt paid his life-long tribute by helping to inaugurate the African Society in commemoration of her interest in African affairs.

Mary Kingsley could equally well be described

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1. Kingsley to Holt, 4 March 1899, 16/3, JHP.
This letter contains the various views described above respecting her relationship with the people referred to. In spite of external influences on her, Kingsley felt that her interest in Africa was originally developed from within her; an attitude which inclined her to uphold what she felt was an article of faith - to present the African as he was and not as he ought to be.
 2. Holt to Morel, 20 June 1900, F.8/1, EDMP.
West Africa, June 1900.
 3. Holt to Morel, 9 Nov. 1911, f8/4, EDMP.
 4. Ibid.

as E.D. Morel's "spiritual mother". If she influenced Holt, Morel was influenced by both, and in a corresponding manner, Morel was also a 'tonic' to Holt.¹ Mary Kingsley inspired Holt spiritually, but Morel fired his imagination. In spite of his personal economic involvement, Holt might never have taken an active interest in the Congo Reform Association were it not for Morel's persistent zeal and influence.² After Kingsley's influence in his "mind and the resultant action, Morel came wearing her mantle, and a great and strong, energetic moral figure, lofty in his ideas, very sensitive, very courageous, and with a great gift of speech."³ Holt continues a description of the Morel influence:

"....It is all very wonderful to think but there it is and it has made me my African mind, what I am. Mary Kingsley discovered me and made me think; Morel carried on her work and kept me thinking, and I perforce had to do what I could to redeem myself from utter meanness by lending a helping hand, not much." 4

This eulogistic acknowledgement of Morel's influence on

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1. Holt to Morel, 1 Jan. 1912, F8/4, EDMP.
Holt here says he is indebted to Morel for "your great moral tonic to me."
 2. See S.J.S. Cookey, Great Britain and the Congo Question, 1892-1913, (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis 1964.)
 3. Holt to Morel, 1 Jan. 1912, F8/4, EDMP.
 4. Ibid.

Holt demands a sketch of his background, an assessment of his attitude to colonial rule and his relationship with the merchant community of Britain.

E.D. Morel combined the virtues and vices of his French father and English mother: he is said to have inherited the French exactitude, acuteness and logicality when he made a point, and demonstrated the English stubbornness, impatience, audacity and scorn for other people's views when he knew they were in the wrong.¹ This combination made him formidable when he attacked or defended a view. As a background to his interest in Africans, we may trace as well another combination of two personal circumstances. His mother descended from the de Hornes, a Quaker family², and this might have left in the young Morel that reformist and humanitarian touch

1. F. Seymour Cocks, E.D. Morel, The Man and His Works, (London, 1920) P. 15.

2. Ibid, P. 18. "The de Hornes appear to have become members of the Society of Friends at a very early period..... and several of them suffered persecution for their faith..... The Friends' Burial Ground at Colchester contains numerous monuments to departed members of the family. The de Hornes married into other families of the same religious persuasion. Thus Morel's mother and the first Lord Monkswell (formerly the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Porrat Collier) had a common ancestor in Dorothy Fox, daughter of Francis Fox, of St German's, Cornwall, who married Joseph Collier of Plymouth, their son Benjamin's only daughter, Mary, marrying Abraham de Horne in 1786. It is an interesting coincidence that the late Lord Monkswell became President of the C.R.A. (founded by Morel) in 1906, in succession to the first President, Earl Beauchamp, who retired from the position on accepting a seat in the cabinet."

associated with Quakerism. Moreover, as a young man, he was in the employ of A.L. Jones¹ in Liverpool where he must have come into contact with the most baleful aspects of West Africa. There and then he plunged into the literature of West Africa, and learned almost everything that he wished to know², so that by the time Kingsley, in one of

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1. Jones, Sir Alfred Lewis, K.C.M.G.(1901) J.P. Hon. Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford; Senior Partner in the firm of Elder, Dempster and Co. Shipowners, President of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and British Cotton Growing Association, Chairman of Bank of British West Africa, Ltd.; Founder of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine; born at Carmarthen, 1846. Clubs Carlton, Constitutional. Died 13 Dec. 1909.
 2. Morel wrote the following in his unpublished reminiscences: "The office I was employed in was the centre of West African interest in Liverpool - indeed in England; and West Africa, I was not long in apprehending, seemed likely to occupy a great deal of public attention. There was something very huge and mysterious about the whole subject which exercised an increasing fascination over my mind. Liverpool was full of West African traditions - mostly evil ones. It had been Bristol's rival in the Slave Trade. The office was always full of black men - stokers and others coming up for their pay; anglicized native merchants, very wealthy some of them; occasionally a striking figure in handsome flowing native garments. To watch a steamer unload her endless barrels of palm-oil, bags of kernels, bags and casks of rubber, elephant tusks, huge mahogany logs and so on, always sent a thrill of excitement down my back. Everything that came from West Africa seemed impregnated with a wonderful pungent smell. The captains were full of weird yarns about wonderful happenings, horrible native customs and such-like. Then, too, one was always hearing vague political talk - of the French trying to steal our 'hinterland', of trouble with the Portuguese or with the Niger Company, of a supine Governor who would not build railways into the interior. I plunged into the old West African literature: learned the geography of the coast, section by section, with the help of maps and steamer charts, studied its flora and fauna, laid myself out to read up everything I could find about the current problems in the newspapers ... the more I read the more interested I grew: international rivalries and administrative problems were forcing West Africa to the front rank of national interest, and secondly that the newspapers seemed extraordinarily ignorant of the whole subject."
- F.1/1, EDMP.

her recruitment drives, brought him to know Holt in 1899, Morel was already one of the most informed people in Britain on West African affairs.

The first meeting of Holt and Morel seemed like the meeting of men from different worlds. For, indeed, there was little in common between the two men who were soon to become bed-fellows. Holt felt that Morel had been sent to get commercial intelligence for his rival in business, A.L. Jones. Morel's assessment was that Holt was an "abrupt and ill-bred" old man.¹ Gradually, however, a common element was discernible. Both had lived tough lives. Morel had lost his father in infancy, and had worked hard in Liverpool, giving part-time French lectures to make ends meet. He had also seen what West Africa was like from his contacts in Liverpool and omnivorous application to its literature. At the same time, he had learned to trust himself. In the same way, Holt was self-reliant, tough and courageous. He had gone to Fernando Po in 1862 at the age of 21; had indulged in the cut-throat competition methods of those days, and had triumphed without the favour "of charter, grant, and concession". Moreover, he "had no contempt for the Africans"² he met there. Therefore, despite their disparity of age and

1. in Holt to Morel, 31 July, 1901, F8/1, EDMF., Holt summarised their attitudes to each other when they first met.

2. Mrs Stopford Green, op. cit.

cultural bearings, "an extensive, almost daily, confidential, warm and often fatherly correspondence grew between Holt and Morel." Wuliger continues in his accurate summary of their early relationship:

"Holt provided a wealth of first hand, intimate information, increased his human contacts, gave him business advice and help, and at times flattered him. Morel, for his part, put on the mantle of enlightened commerce, and stood with Holt in almost every issue that came up about West Africa." ¹

This relationship was, as with Kingsley and Holt, one of mutual inspiration and education. From the beginning Holt helped to bring Morel to the limelight. It was Holt who suggested that Morel should address the Women's Liberal Association at its annual meeting in June, 1901.² He had advised Morel, who addressed the women on "England's Relations to Her Native Races in West Africa", to use the occasion to meet influential people who could be of use to him later.³ Holt's generous judgments of Morel's efforts encouraged him. This was of immense help to Morel because "to feel that you whom

1. See Robert Wuliger, The Idea of Economic Imperialism, with Special Reference to the Life and Work of E.D. Morel. (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis in Economic History 1959) P.15.

2. The meeting was held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, on Tuesday 11 June, 1901.

3. Holt to Morel, 26 May, 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

poor Miss Kingsley used to call her political leader think so well of my efforts"¹, was a precious asset and a great moral encouragement. And although late in 1901 they had differed on a business deal, Morel implored "Miss Kingsley's political prophet" to continue to be his guide.² Even after Morel had virtually seized the initiative, he was still full of respect and gratitude to Holt. He confided this to Holt:

".....To a very considerable extent I have got you to thank for moulding my views on West African affairs, for condescending to argue with me; for allowing me to hold forth by the yard, (so) to speak; for giving me at any and every time, and on any West African subject, your time, your attention and your knowledge; for writing me letters which are a West African education in (itself).....all this I have to thank you for, as I have to thank poor Miss Kingsley for bringing me into touch with you....." 3

Apart from this encouragement, Holt protected Morel from his enemies. In 1899 when A.L. Jones threatened to deal with Morel for alleged disrespect to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, it was to Holt that Mary Kingsley appealed not to see with Jones on the matter. She told Holt that Morel "was a struggling

1. Morel to Holt, 7 Nov. 1900, 18/1, JHP.

2. Morel to Holt, 20 Oct. 1901, 18/1, JHP.

3. Morel to Holt, 28 Oct. 1902, 18/1, JHP.

young man with a family", and that she would be "sorry for them" if Jones cooperated with Goldie in the latter's "nagging" to "get rid of him."¹ At other times, when Morel suffered from the underhand attacks of Jones and other foes, he was sustained by the friendship, kindness and support of Holt, who often cheered his spirits when he was gloomy, and provided him "with that stimulus which a nature like mine wants so badly at times".²

Holt was, however, keen on keeping the journalistic influence of Morel to his own advantage, and he was wont to deflect him from meeting too many important men except those he approved of. In 1905, when Morel felt that taking office in the African Society "might strengthen my moral position", Holt's paternal disapproval was entire:

"I do not want to see you in the company of such a lot of respectables that you may run the danger of becoming as emasculated as they are. I see the influence of your connexion with these 'powers that be' in that you not so freely criticize their doings as you used to. You are becoming too friendly in

1. Kingsley to Holt, 25 July, 1899, 16/4, JHP.

2. Morel to Holt, 25 Dec. 1902, 18/1, JHP.

personal matters to be able freely to criticize their doings. You are able to listen with patience to a man who is evidently in favour of killing the natives in order to do good....." 1

Thenceforward, Holt never relaxed his effort to keep Morel under his thumb. In 1911 he wanted Morel to become the Secretary and publicist of the African Association together with the African Mail.² But Morel felt that the salary the Association promised was paltry, in any case, he told Holt that such a connection would "fetter my independence in all these questions."³ Yet Holt insisted that Morel should be the correspondent and contact-man of his company in London at a retainer.⁴ Morel's quotation of Emerson on independence was merely academic; five months later he signed a contract with the Company for one year.⁵ Lack of financial independence and his great respect for Holt, often led Morel to temper abstract principles with the hard facts of life.

Once he was assured of Holt's support, Morel virtually seized the initiative in their politics of dissent in the interest of Africans and British Commercial power. His chief claim to universal fame was his

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1. Holt to Morel, 28 Sept. 1905, F8/2, EDMP.
 2. Holt to Morel, 10 April 1911, F8/4, EDMP.
 3. Morel to Holt, 12 April 1911, 18/8, JHP.
 4. Holt to Morel, 26 April 1911, F8/4, EDMP.
 5. Morel to Holt, 25 Aug, 1911, 18/8, JHP.

championship of African rights which at that time were being undermined by a reckless and swift application of European capitalism in tropical Africa. An apostle of the Third Party¹, later to become its ostensible leader, Morel soon reduced to an academic theory of trusteeship the attitudes of his School. He contrasted two methods of administering tropical Africa, and, therefore, two divergent policies. One method was to dispossess the African of his rights in land, to declare that the whole territory and its products were the property of some European state or corporation, and then to exploit it in the interest of European capitalism, using the African either as a slave or as a hired labourer. This method, according to Morel, led to the degradation of the African, and eventually to the ruin of his country. The reasons, he said, were both psychological and economic. If the African was deprived of his land rights, he would put no effort into his work. He became unhappy, and if force were substituted to induce him to work, the regime would become atrocious, as was seen in the case of the Congo. In any case, possessing no property of his own, the African would have nothing with which to purchase the manufactured goods of Europe. Consequently, imports would fall; there might be some native risings ruthlessly suppressed which might lead to depopulation, trade would dwindle, the cost

1. Holt to Morel, 9 Nov. 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

of products might increase, - and finally, the tax-payer in Britain would be called upon to advance funds.¹

Although Morel treated this logic with the unflinching faith of a revealed religion, arguments could be advanced to prove that the party he opposed theoretically had a good case.²

The other method, which he advocated, was a policy of preservation of the rights of the African in land. He wanted the African to be recognized as a free man, a human being who needed some help in the development of his country, not as a mere tool of industry. He persistently advocated this policy in the teeth of bitter opposition from concession-hunters.³ Morel saw this question of Land Tenure as the key to the whole problem of African administration. He summarized his case with characteristic logic:

"Native ownership in land must needs be the foundation-stone of all normal European rule in the African tropics, because the economic objects of normal European rule is the development of commercial

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1. Vide E.D. Morel, Great Britain and the Congo, (Smith Elder & Co.) P. 86 for Morel's marshalling of these views.
 2. Vide Hancock, op. cit., Pp. 173 - 236 where the pros and cons arguments re concessions are made.
 3. This is treated in Chap. VI.

relations, and any between the European and the native is impossible, unless the native has articles to sell with which to purchase manufactured goods.....In other words, as long as the native has free access to the soil, he will develop his land, he will put forth every effort to increase its productive value, he will exchange its produce with manufactured goods, sent from Europe, a normal commercial relationship will be set up, imports and exports will expand, the prosperity of the whole country will increase, and incidentally, the workers of Britain, or France or Belgium will benefit, first by the employment created by the manufacture of the goods exported to West Africa, secondly by the increased supply of valuable foodstuffs and raw materials." 1

This meant that the policy of expropriation injured British trade and demoralised Africans, and was regarded by the Third Party, not only as a beacon to anarchy, but also as immoral and uneconomic.²

Having, then, armed himself with a formidable theory of Colonial government, Morel immediately proceeded to stir up the colonial conscience in Britain. Like Mary Kingsley, who blazed the trail, Morel found himself still confronted by a public which knew little or nothing

1. Morel, Great Britain and the Congo, P. 86-87.
See Chaps. V. and VI.

2. Ibid.

about African problems and was largely indifferent to their implications. He determined to continue the work of Kingsley, to rouse ~~that~~ public from indifference and apathy. Despite the ferocity of his opponents, he championed the cause of enlightened policy in tropical Africa. For the purpose of clarity and logic, he reduced his own theory to a three-point programme. First, he reminded the British public in his writings that a system of African right to the land really had existed in West Africa, as far as could be ascertained, from time immemorial, and that this system was just and adapted to the needs of that country. Secondly, he consistently maintained that the West African, when treated as a free man, was hard-working and industrious, capable with little administrative supervision of developing his country. Viewed from this angle, his anger with Grogan and his break with Weinthal are understandable. Thirdly, he never equivocated on the issue of Free Trade which he saw as the natural process of trade.¹ The historical merits of these apparently academic ideas need not now be discussed until we see Morel actually fighting for his beliefs. What is particularly relevant here is how these views were received by his contemporaries.

1. These ideas appear in Morel's works but for a clear exposition, see Cocks, op. cit, Pp. 43 - 52. Grogan insisted on the lazy African myth and Morel goes all out for him. vide Morel, Affairs of West Africa, Pp. 178 - 182.

Apart from savage, but unilluminating, newspaper war waged by perverted racists, reviews to a book would normally indicate the reactions of articulate members of the society to its message. In 1902 Morel published his first book, Affairs of West Africa, which indicated the reforms he wished to see in West African colonial administration. Public response equally represented the various British attitudes. Some people found the work careless, extravagant, emotional and brash. The Times, although it found "great satisfaction that the public will welcome a contribution to our general knowledge on the subject, at once so intelligent, and so informing as Mr E.D. Morel's", however went on to register its disapproval for the author having "fallen into error based on an insufficient knowledge" of African countries. At the other favourable extreme, the book was found to be informative and stimulating. Sir Charles Dilke was of the opinion that the book constituted "the best reflection on the conditions of Africa" which had been produced "since that curious volume the Dark Continent". W.T. Stead, the crusader and editor, praised the book. An enthusiastic reviewer in the Speaker said it was "so replete with information, so free from prejudice, and so full of good suggestions for the greater prosperity of west Africa that it cannot be too widely or

too carefully studied"¹. The most penetrating appreciation, however, came from quarters characterized by neither unsoberly adulation nor carping bigotry. The Glasgow Herald wrote that "Mr Morel is an able representative of the Liverpool School of thought about West Africa, the school which combines faith in Kingsleyism with an eye to the main chance, that is, Liverpool trade and rooted suspicion of all governmental ways and proceedings."² This tone was taken up by the Aborigines' Friend which while describing some of Morel's projected reforms as "questionable", truly discerned him as "a disciple of Miss Mary Kingsley, and spokesman for the more broad-minded section of the Liverpool and Manchester traders, who carry on most of the British commerce in West Africa...."³

To a great extent both latter views are valid; but one cannot fully understand the exact role of Morel vis-à-vis the merchant community until one gains an insight into the personal equations involved in these relationships. But before analysing these relationships it is necessary first to examine the role of an organ which not only

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1. W.T. Stead, the 'crusader', was editor (with A.G. Gardiner) of the Daily News and Leader. Holt and Morel had a high opinion of him; he was also very popular on the West Coast for his writings on behalf of natives.
 2. Glasgow Herald, 'Review of E.D. Morel's Affairs of West Africa', 27 Dec. 1902, F.3., EDMP.
 3. A.F. April 1903.
(For reviews see F.3, EDMP)

represented the apogee of Morel's journalistic effort, and fostered the enlightened interests of traders and West Africans, but also indicated the true nature of the relationship between the different parties.

Up to this time, Morel had been editorial assistant to E. Hugh Chalmers in West Africa. He was finding himself unfairly over-worked and exploited by his chief. He alleged that Chalmers was using him for questionable roles, interfered with his letters, was peremptory in his dealings, and calumnised him with men who mattered.¹ When in February 1903 his two-year contract with Chalmers expired, Morel resigned from service in West Africa. Before then, in 1902, he had asked the merchants to support a new West African weekly paper which he contemplated to inaugurate. But until the plan bore fruit, the traders arranged to pay him as their publicist and contact man², and when his connection with Chalmers

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1. In a letter to Bishop Dr Joseph Crane Hartzel, dated 17 April 1903, Copy F 9, EDMP., Morel referred to Chalmers' uncharitableness and wicked insinuations against him. He told Hartzel that he "wrote practically the whole of West Africa, and Chalmers got the credit."
 2. Mrs Green had helped in negotiating this. Morel's connection with Mrs Green is discussed later in this chapter.

lapsed¹, Morel courageously started a new editorship by organising and promoting the West African Mail, a paper which although it never really was a financial success for the fourteen years of its existence, was the organ of the Third Party. Because the West African Mail was the chief medium through which this party expressed their views on West Africa, and as an organisation which revealed Morel's relationship with others, an account of his editorship of this paper is imperative.

The West African Mail was run by a company, E.D. Morel, Limited, founded by Morel in February 1903. The main object of this company was the publication of this weekly paper. Morel was employed as its editor on a salary of £400 per annum, and a contract was signed with John Richardson and Sons of Liverpool to print the paper.

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1. Apart from his association with West Africa, and later with the West African Mail, Morel's association with other journalists became closer once he established himself in journalism. "He knew and associated in his editorial work with the following: H.W. Massingham and Sir Henry Norman (joint-editors of the Daily Chronicle till the Boer War); Sir Douglas Straight and H.N. Cust of the Pall Mall Gazette; the late Sir James Knowles of the Nineteenth Century; Sir Percy Bunting of the Contemporary Review; J.L. Hammond of the Speaker (now the New Statesman and Nation); C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian; Sir Edward Russell of the Liverpool Daily Post; W.T. Stead and A.G. Gardiner of the Daily News and Leader; Robert Donald of the Daily Chronicle; J.S.R. Philips of the Yorkshire Post; J. Nicol Dunn and Fabian Ware, successive editors of the Morning Post; Sir Valentine Chirol, for many years foreign editor of the Times, and Greig, for some colonial editor of the same journal."
- Cocks, op. cit, Pp. 30-31.

On 3 April, 1903 the maiden volume of this weekly was launched along with its aims. The first of these was to attract the attention, and to widen the interest of all classes in West Africa generally. Secondly, it aimed at supporting existing commercial, mining and industrial interests with as full, reliable and impartial business intelligence as possible, and to show how necessary it was for the safe-guarding of those interests that current political events taking place in Africa should be studied by practical businessmen engaged in the West African world of affairs. Thirdly, it wished to help by every means the two great movements connected with West Africa, namely the Sanitation Movement (which was centred round the London and Liverpool Schools of Tropical Medicine), and the Cotton Growing Movement whose role later became questionable. Lastly, the West African Mail hoped "to bring to bear upon political and administrative questions relating to the development of West Africa by the nations of Western Europe such criticism as may be necessary and available, in the interest of both the European and the native."¹ Thus the paper was intended to be at once a business organ and a medium for public instruction. If the enthusiastic

1. West African Mail, 3 April 1903.

wishes showered on Morel when the paper appeared¹ would be taken as an indication, a great financial success might have been anticipated.

From the start, however, the paper was in desperate financial circumstances. The authorized capital of the company was £5,000, divided into 5,000 £1 shares of which 3,000 were first issued. Of this £3,000, Morel had put down £500 as a guarantee for bona fides. He also entered into self-denying agreements to give other shareholders 6% of the interests before he took his due², apart from his salary which he did not even draw for several years. The Managing Directors' Report read by Morel at the Registered Office of the Company in Liverpool on 4 May 1903 (only a few months after) revealed, however, that of the £3,000 worth of shares issued only £2,512 had been received (that is combining both cash and promise).³ Morel summarized the administration of the

1. Good wishes were sent to Morel by Sir Charles Dilke, Sir H.H. Johnston, Sir Alfred Jones, Sir Edward Russell, Mrs Alice Stopford Green, Professor Donald Ross, W.T. Stead, F. Swanzy, J.A. Hutton, John Holt, Dr E.W. Blyden, C.J. Cutcliffe Hyne, and Winston S. Churchill. Vide WAM, 3 April 1903.

2. Morel to Holt, Feb. 1903, 18/9, JHP.

3. A letter from Morel to Holt dated May 1903 indicates the probable shareholders, but it must be noted that many of them did not pay up the shares promised as follows:

Morel £500	Hutton £100	Budges £125
John Holt £500	Swanzy £100	Morel's father-
A.L. Jones £500	Mrs Green £100	in law £100
de Card £250	L. Jones £100	Tubbs £100
Zochonis £250	Swift £250	
see 18/9, JHP;	also G. 2b - 4b, EDMP.	

paper as having been run economically, but that "it is no small undertaking to create a paper out of nothing - everything has had to be made, not copied from a service of news, reserve of matter, advertising organization, extensive circulation agencies, etc."¹ He optimistically hoped that "it is only in the actual development of all these matters that one gets one's experience."

From this time onwards, the fortunes of the paper oscillated from a momentary hope to a dismal financial gloom. Between February 1903 and 31 January 1904 the paper made remarkable strides "as a wage-earner", and tried to consolidate its position with the advertising public. The average advertising revenue per issue for the month of April 1903 had been £16. 18. Od., by January 1903, it had amounted to £42. 19. 7d.² Soon after, however, a letter of 31 March 1904, circularised and signed by Arthur Hutton of Manchester and Zochonis, the Liverpool trader, alerted other traders that the West African Mail was doing exceedingly valuable and honest work for West African interests generally, but was in need of further capital.³ In January 1904 the position had been so hopeful that Morel in his report was confident that the

1. Morel to Holt, 9 March 1904, 18/2, JHP.

2. 'Report of the Managing Director, from 12 Feb. 1903 to 31 Jan. 1904, to be presented 14 March 1904. 18/9 JHP.

3. J. Arthur Hutton and Zochonis to Holt, 31 March 1904, 18/9, JHP.

paper in course of time would give financial returns to its shareholders.¹ This was never to be realised. On 20 December of 1904, Morel informed Holt that the paper required the instant attention of the shareholders.² Within the two years of its existence the company had spent £3,000 in building up a property with a present "earning capacity" of some £2,300 per annum.³ This "earnings" might have been good business if it had represented 'profits'; actually the net annual losses often represented the difference of these sums. Although the first few years of any newspaper are normally bad, these have been unprecedentedly bad for the West African Mail.

Several circumstances contributed to this embarrassing situation. Apart from advertisements, the circulation of a paper of this description could never be considerable in a Britain largely apathetic to colonial information except when they were tinged with fantasy. Attempts were made to display the paper at a number of bookstalls and railway stations, but to continue this meant a considerable outlay which the company could not meet. In Europe and the United States of America, attempts were made at circulation, but with limited success.

1. Report of the Managing Director, op. cit. 18/9, JHP.

2. Morel to Holt, 20 Dec. 1904., 18/2, JHP.

3. Ibid.

In West Africa, agents were appointed at Sierra Leone, Cape Coast, Bathurst, Conakry, Old Calabar, Lagos and Sapele, but with the exception of Sierra Leone, where the work was well done by a Sierra Leone Coaling company, results were on the whole unsatisfactory. The Agents in Cape Coast, the Donovan Agency, did not render any account for several months. An Agency was established at no cost in Hamburg and another in Paris, but produced no large results. An experiment in the United States and Canada was unsuccessful and was cancelled. Other events, however remote, might have adversely affected a paper already suffering from rickety finances. Externally, one event after another was disadvantageous. The collapse of the West African Mining Market deprived the paper of much mining revenue in the shape of advertisements and company-meeting announcements. The protectionist agitation and the Russo-Japanese War both might have reduced trade, and consequently the advertising revenue of the company. But the failure to build up an American advertising connection after £350 had been spent on the enterprise, and the venality of dishonest servants, all increased the bad debts already incurred.¹

One of the real sources of financial failure was the small amount of paid-up capital with which the Company was run. Merchants who benefitted most from the paper were

1. Ibid.; also 'Report of the Managing Director 1904'.

not too generous to it; while the "malignant hatred of Jones" must have discouraged would-be supporters. Although the losses seemed to decline between 1904 and 1907, the record was by no means encouraging. By February 1907, the margin between the realisable assets and the liabilities of the company was so narrow that the Directors' Report for that year spoke of winding up the company. The paper was kept going mainly by the persistent, though tardy, generosity of Holt and the tenacity of Morel. The bulk of the merchants (since the paper did not immediately produce profits) did not show sufficient financial interest by supporting an organ which publicised their activities. In 1910, Morel agreed with Holt that the attitude of the merchants was short-sighted and unimaginative in not realising the importance of the paper to their interests.¹ Much of the straits in which the paper found itself was, however, in part due to the competition from West Africa, which despite its imperfections after Morel left it, was older in the field; there was little room at that time for two papers in so specialised a field as West Africa.

In spite of its financial and organisational trouble the African Mail pursued the policy marked out for it at its inception. Commercially, it provided the West African trade with weekly information valuable to the merchants' community. In political and economic affairs, it opposed

1. Morel to Holt, 19 Oct. 1910, 18/7, JHP.
Morel to Holt, 28 Aug. 1910, 18/7, JHP.

monopoly, privilege and all impediments to free circulation of trade in Africa. It advocated the claims of the merchant community to representation and consultation in all administrative questions directly and indirectly affecting trade. It advocated the importance of sanitation in West Africa and backed the work of the two Schools of Tropical Medicine. It helped the British Cotton Growing Association by publishing a large amount of information on the subject¹, but when impure motives were alleged against the promoters of the Cotton movement, the African Mail began to judiciously sit on the fence and later to criticise the Association. The African Mail advertised and publicised the West African Colonies in Britain, however restricted its influence was. In June 1900, a correspondent in the Lagos Weekly Record had stigmatised the apathy of the British public towards West African affairs in relation to other imperial issues: "It is eloquent of the thralldom exercised over the public mind by the war in South Africa, that the acquisition by Great Britain of an empire in West Africa, half the size of India, should have passed well-nigh unnoticed. General Lugard's departure from Britain at the end of the last year, to take up the administration of Northern Nigeria, was but casually referred to in the Press, and the full

1. 'Reports of the Managing Director', 18/9, JHP.

significance of the transfer of powers from the Niger Company to the Colonial Office over the Niger territories is - speaking generally - quite unrealised by the people at home."¹ The African Mail bridged this gap. In 1911, Hesketh Bell thanked Morel for the service of his paper with respect to his own administrative area, but this role was representative. "Advertisement is as necessary to a new country as to a patent medicine" said Hesketh Bell, "and until the great British Public is awakened to a consciousness of what Northern Nigeria is like, its needs of administration will go unfulfilled."²

Most important, the paper championed the just cause of Africans, and identified itself with international questions (its supplement became a specialist organ of the Congo Reform Association) which proved both materially and morally beneficial; it increased its sale at home, brought in new subscribers, and achieved the moral success of being quoted extensively in the world press, to be mentioned often in the House of Commons, on public platforms, and to acquire a certain prestige.³ Holt always complained that the African Mail was not critical enough of the West African Governments and the Colonial

1. Lagos Weekly Record, 23 June 1900.

2. H. Bell to Morel, 3 Oct. 1911, F9/A-B, EDMP.

3. Reports of the Managing Director 18/9, JHP.

Office.¹ This might have induced Morel to make some wild and unsubstantiated statements²; otherwise he was a critic of experience. The African Mail was read in the Colonial Office and by West African officials. The Colonial Office files contain several articles in the paper which were minuted upon by the officials. There can be no doubt that it did enormous good as one of the most powerful and positive checks upon the Colonial Office deliberations on West Africa in a public sense. Indeed, within the period of its existence, the African Mail, because of its penetrating and encyclopaedic quality, constitutes one of the most valuable source-materials for any social, political and economic history of West Africa.

The attitude of the merchant community to the African Mail was a reflection of their attitude to the more important question of African welfare and Morel's political and economic ideas. The three major Chambers of Commerce, although they continued their traditional role as pressure-groups, only vaguely canvassed the true interest of Africans. They were almost wholly concerned with the commercial advantages for which the Chambers were founded. In spite of the perennial references which the

1. Holt to Morel, 2 Feb. 1906, F.8/3, EDMP.

2. Minute of 21 Sept. 1906 by R.L. Antrobus on West African Mail article of 21 Sept. 1906 on the Crewe Road Affair, CO 520/40 (See Chap. IV).

African Trade Sections of these Chambers made to African welfare, they were really committed to mercantile prosperity, strict benefit to their particular trade, its safety, and cooperation or opposition with the British Government as each measure was adopted.² They always were critical of state intervention and control and the octopus of officialism, but members did not scruple to use their positions in the various Trade Sections for promoting personal ends. An apt illustration of this sorry state of affairs was the role of most influential businessmen in the West African Committee meetings. At the instance of commercial pressure, typified in the activity of Mary Kingsley, the Colonial Office started regular meetings (at the C.O.) with representatives of the London, Liverpool and Manchester Chambers of Commerce, the Under-Secretary of State for Colonies usually presiding.³ Merchants had advocated and supported these meetings where Government policy was explained to them and their suggestions

1. Elijah Helm, Chapters in the History of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce (with an Address by the Rt. Hon the Earl of Roseberry) (London, 1897) Pp. 1-2.
The Manchester Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1794 when it was called a "Commercial Society". In his speech, Roseberry referred to the pressure-group activity of the Chamber when, for example, it helped in carrying the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.
2. Charles E. Musgrave, The London Chamber of Commerce from 1881 to 1914 (London, 1914) P. 87.
Musgrave was Asst. Sec. 1881-1909 and Sec. from 1909 to 1914 of the London Chamber which had been formed and incorporated in Oct. 1881.
3. See Musgrave, *op. cit.*, P. 40.

discussed. Some time after, however, personal interests seriously brought the existence of these meetings to question. People, like Alfred Jones, who had supported these meetings when they had influence at the Colonial Office, began to agitate in favour of discontinuing them—according to Holt because "he finds he has not got the hold of the present Colonial Office leaders that he had when Marlborough and Churchill reigned there". Holt discerned the implication of this self-interest in the same letter to Morel:

".....Miss Kingsley strongly advocated the union of the governing classes with the merchants in the interest of our West African possessions. Jones was an advocate of these conferences when they were inaugurated and they started well enough and did useful work for a time, but unfortunately public ideals were not kept to the front; the representatives did not go to London to voice the views of their Committees but personal views and personal interests were put in front and selfish aims took the place of public aims. It is a great pity, but with Jones in charge of Liverpool and Moor in charge of London and Hutton leading Manchester, it is all cotton growing and steamship instead of the wider interests of the community and the promotion of the moral and material welfare of the natives of Africa....." 1

1. Holt to Morel, 17 Dec. 1908, F8/3, EDMF.

Of course, if Alfred Jones, Arthur Hutton and Ralph Moor were asked their views, they would claim that cotton culture and shipping were beneficial to trade generally and to the African as well. As will be seen later, these industries were to a great degree essential, but the people running them were too "interested advocates" and were "too apt to overlook other more important matters in their eager pursuit of their own special hobbies...."¹

Holt and Morel then tried to rouse the merchant community to show more interest in the affairs of West Africans. The position of comparative disinterestedness among the traders and businessmen generally, particularly those in Liverpool, emphasized and made more remarkable the isolated activity of Holt and Morel. After Mary Kingsley had made energetic, but futile, efforts to unite and bestir them to a fuller consciousness of their imperial duty, they were still unimaginative and after individual advantages. In the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber², there was sad inactivity even after Holt had

1. Holt to Morel, 17 Dec. 1908, F.8/3, EDMP.

2. Its Chairman was Sir A.J. Jones with Holt sometimes his deputy. After the death of Jones in 1909, G.A. Moore became the Chairman.

rallied members. He summarized the position in a letter to Morel:

"In the Chamber there is nobody giving special attention to West African matters though the office staff and appliances have been enlarged for the purpose.....they give so much time to entertainments that they have little time to spare for business....." 1

He lamented that "traders as a class took too shallow an idea of their lives and duties, never thinking of the basic laws affecting their trade and existence," (that is by not taking a deeper interest in Africans). "They always do not think below the surface of things."²

At times, personal issues obscured the true merit of these ideals of African welfare; they, however, also explained them. John Holt and Morel found a mutual target in Sir A.L. Jones. Holt could not trust Jones who was not only his rival in business but also very powerful with the "powers that be". He was also suspected of speaking ill of Holt behind his back in order to 'injure' him with those in power.³ He was believed to be a "hypocrite" and Chamberlain's sycophant, and "would sacrifice a friend for financial expediency"⁴. Morel, who was also at the

1. Holt to Morel, 22 Aug. 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

3. Holt alleged that Jones would normally tell any of the West African Governors if he (Holt) criticised their actions in the Chamber.

4. Several letters from Holt to Morel allege this.

head of the Congo movement, attacked Jones the more for using his position as the Consul of King Leopold of Belgium to obstruct his efforts to arouse the conscience of Britain.¹ In any case, since Jones represented the symbol of monopoly and privilege, which the Third Party badly hated, he became the butt of Morel's journalistic power.²

There were, of course, some merchants who shared the Third Party ideals but were allegedly prevented by Jones from associating with them. F. Swanzy³ often showed keen interest in Morel's views expressed in West Africa on African affairs, and might as well have been regarded as a member of their enlightened Party, but the great influence which Jones had over him was alleged to have blunted his independence.⁴ Trigge⁵, as Morel told Holt, was a "man of much larger ideas" until "Jones filled

1. Vide S.J.S. Cookey, Great Britain and the Congo, op. cit.
2. Vide Chap. VII of the present thesis for a discussion of the role of A.L. Jones.
3. F. Swanzy had financed the Windwood Read Expedition to the Niger, Read was a journalist who visited West Africa and later published lurid accounts: African Sketchbook (1873), Savage Africa (1867).
Kingsley to Holt, 4 July 1898, 16/2, JHP.
4. Holt to Morel, 8 June 1901, F8./1, EDMP.
5. Was a director of the Niger Company.

him up with all sorts of bitter fairy tales about me..."¹
 Russell² sympathised with Morel's labours but incipiently.
 H.E. Cookson was too old to play any dynamic humanitarian
 role³. Apart from one or two exceptions, Morel agreed
 with Holt that lack of genuine interest in West Africans
 by merchants was widespread:

".....The bulk of the merchants have very
 few ideas outside their business and a natural
 outcome of this is rather to make them almost
 resentful of any one that has. Also they had the
 field so long to themselves that they do not feel
 the need of studying anything outside the
 fluctuations of the market....." 4

To Morel, George Miller,⁵ was among the most
 prominent in this party of indifference to West Africans.⁶
 It was no use for Holt to preach to him that Miller had

1. Morel to Holt, 12 Sept. 1910, 18/7, JHP.
2. Edward Russell had business connections in the Congo
 and the Gold Coast.
3. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1901, F8/1, EDMP.
 H. Cookson was a director of Hatton, Cookson and Co.
 Ltd; a Liverpool firm of merchants with interest in
 West Africa.
4. Morel to Holt, 12 Sept. 1910, 18/7, JHP.
5. George Miller was at this time director of Miller
 Brothers, which was originally a Glasgow firm with
 business agencies in Liverpool and West Africa.
6. Morel to Holt, 12 Sept. 1910, 18/7, JHP.

"his share of goodness if only we could get at it and work it"¹, for Morel had already made up his mind that Miller was "a very miserable specimen, with no knowledge of men and little of things."² It is possible, as Holt regretted, that there might be "something lacking in me or in him which prevents our harmonizing"³, and although Morel was not surprised at this, the point was that none of them had struck the appropriate chord in Miller, in the same manner as Kingsley and Morel had fired Holt's imagination. Morel believed that the cause of Miller's apathy to African welfare was his desire always to lead. He liked to shine as "a prominent personality", as a "big man in the public eye". Vain and egocentric, "he combines great canniness with considerable ambition"; interests in Africans, moreover, being immediately unremunerative, Miller was therefore not genuinely interested in it.⁴ Apart from their role in the Congo movement, (where personal interests were also involved) the merchant community remained ununited for humanitarian actions.

It might be said in defence of the Chambers of Commerce that the connection between business and sentiment

1. Holt to Morel, 24 July 1912, F8/4, EDMP.

2. Morel to Holt, 4 Jan. 1912, 18/8, JHP.

3. Holt to Morel, March 1912, 18/8, JHP.

4. Morel to Holt, 21 Jan. 1906, 18/3, JHP.

is apparent only in the world of ideas, not of existing facts. But even the Chambers would repudiate this defence since they saw themselves as humanitarians as well.

Almost every letter written to the Colonial Office, by the Chambers of Commerce, was couched in terms solicitous of African welfare. They almost defeated the Third Party in their own game. The Chambers of Commerce, probably, knew that a just appreciation of the eternal laws of right and wrong, with due regard for humanity, should lie at the root of commercial action.¹ In practice, however, they allowed their business instincts to overcome this essential humanitarianism.

In the British business world, however, there was another redeeming feature. The enlightened role of William A. Cadbury² supplemented the magnanimous support given by Holt to Morel's African work. Cadbury came from a great Birmingham Quaker family. His extensive business enterprises in West Africa, particularly connected with cocoa culture and trade, probably induced him to an obligatory interest in West Africans. His religious

1. Vide Musgrave, London Chamber of Commerce, op. cit. P.90.

2. Cadbury, William Adlington, 2nd son of Richard Cadbury; Head of engineering section of family Bourneville Model Village; Director of the Firm of Cadbury; visited Gold Coast and Ashanti 1909, and again in 1930, on behalf of his company for cocoa culture; Lord Mayor of Birmingham, 1919.
For the role of Cadbury Brothers, vide I.A. Williams, The Firm of Cadbury, 1831 - 1931 (London 1931).

convictions, as a Quaker with its natural compassion for the ill-treated and wronged, probably induced him to help in the campaign to set things right not only in West Africa but also in the Congo.¹ Holt appreciated Cadbury's broadmindedness. He regarded him with affection. On 6 September 1910, when Morel was about to pay Cadbury a visit, Holt conveyed his admiration to him:

"When you visit Mr Cadbury.....say how much I admire his African work, and the high principles which have induced him to do all he has done and tried to do for the benefit of the Black race, which has been for so many years forcibly drawn upon to cultivate the Islands of San Thome....." ²

And when on 22 May 1911, Cadbury was expected to visit Holt, the emotions of the latter were not handicapped; indeed they ran riot when he expressed his feelings to Morel:

"I can hardly tell you with what joy I look forward to the visit, although I know that it will also be a most trying one to me, as I should have to see a man of uncommon greatness of mind, and character, a man who soars high above the ordinary crowd, and a person that I cannot meet without evoking very strong feelings. There are some men it is impossible to

1. Rene MacColl, Roger Casement (1963), P. 63.

2. Holt to Morel, 6 Sept. 1910, F.8/4, LDMP.

meet without strong emotional feelings, and I am sure that Cadbury is one of them. He is so great - great I mean in everything that constitutes human greatness in the higher sense....." 1

The very extravagance of this sentiment (which Morel equally shared) was probably symptomatic of their mournful isolation at a time when other merchants proclaimed humanitarian ideals while deprecating the very instrument that was essential for these ideals to materialize. In contrast, Cadbury's idealism was not phoney though esoteric. He had taken notice of Morel's role in the African Mail, particularly when he defended him against attacks by people who either misunderstood or misrepresented his methods in the West African Islands, and on the Gold Coast. The relationship, which Holt had helped to foster, was immediately solidified by financial dependence on the one, and journalistic support by the other. Cadbury matched the extravagant emotions for him, by extravagant generosity to Morel. It was Cadbury who made Morel's tour to West Africa in 1910 possible. And when Morel later attempted to enter Parliament, Cadbury's generosity was so fantastic that one begins to wonder whether a quid pro quo was not perverting genuine idealism. Cadbury agreed to give Morel £800 a year, plus another £400 "for each

1. Holt to Morel, 22 May 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

election you have to fight before you enter into Parliament." If Morel happened to die, Cadbury agreed to pay his widow £500 a year, until their youngest son was of age, when this would be reduced to £300 per annum. However, if Morel felt that the annuity of £800 was not enough, he would favourably consider any supplementary estimates he might submit, "especially during the years of special expense on the children's education." And he caps this fantastic munificence with a generous encouragement: "I have, as you know, the fullest confidence in you all and it is my earnest desire that you should get into Parliament where your special abilities will have the most scope."¹

The financial support which Holt and Cadbury provided supplemented Morel's acquaintance with the political and social elites of the time. The latter connection was mainly encouraged by the practical force of Alice Amelia Adderley Stopford Green. Mrs Green, the seventh daughter of Rev. Edward Adderley Stopford of Meath, and the wife of John Richard Green, the historian, inherited the rigid tenets of her mother's almost-Calvinist protestantism, and her father's political ability.² During the ten years following her husband's death in 1883, her house in

1. Cadbury to Morel, 12 April 1912, F.8. EDMP.

2. Rev. Stopford had opposed the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, but seeing that Gladstone was determined upon it, he eventually assisted him in drafting the Bill of 1869.
DNB.

Kensington Square became the centre of a brilliant group of friends.¹ Following her husband's footsteps, she became a radical and ardent Home Ruler. But she developed her own individual qualities. Her conversational powers and mordant wit were said to have made her formidable in arguments.²

It was probably Holt that introduced Morel to her in 1901. Morel's association with Mrs Green proved most valuable. As a Vice-President of the African Society, she knew almost every Colonial Governor and Colonial Office official. She introduced Morel to the "men who mattered", including Sir Harry Johnston, de Card, Sidney Buxton, Reginald Antrobus of the Colonial Office, Arthur Brisbane and others. She brought Morel into contact with responsible journalism, which probably influenced his critical methods. She disliked Lugard, Milner and Cromer³, and other military Imperialists of

1. These included Florence Nightingale, Mary Kingsley, Bishop and Mrs Creighton, Mr & Mrs Humphrey Ward, Bishop Stubbs, John Morley, R.B. Haldane, H.A.L. Fisher and Winston Churchill.

2. D.N.B.

3. In an undated letter to Morel, Mrs Green regarded Cromer's statement that he opposed female suffrage "because men are men and women are women" as 'senseless'. Also Holt later told Morel that Cromer's reason was disappointing coming from such an 'eminent man'. But Miss Kingsley considered the question unimportant so far as even traders were not within the pale of power. Mrs Green also said that "Lugard is the worst enemy of freedom next to Milner that we have" (Mrs Green to Morel, 4 Nov. 1901). She was opposed to their military administrative minds.

that class. Towards the end of the 19th Century she in fact came politically under the influence of an Irish journalist, John Francis Taylor, and her views progressively became "~~anti~~-English and anti Imperial on nearly every question". She became a close personal friend of that tragic worthy and moral pervert, Sir Roger Casement, and later emigrated to her country, Ireland, where she became a Senator with a string of academic honours.

Mrs Green's influence in Imperial affairs and home politics, although it cannot be precisely pin-pointed, was probably great. Mary Kingsley even acknowledged that "she is a far greater power than I ever was in London".¹ She was in touch with everyone who mattered, and "was amazingly clever".² She had not been brought up in the "Coast School", as Kingsley told Holt, but she liked Africans, and appreciated Holt and Kingsley for their pro-African activities and broadmindedness. But before her death, Kingsley's English patriotism had almost estranged her with Mrs Green, and she tried to wean Holt from her:

"Suppose there was something that would do England a great deal of harm if it were generally known, well I should not tell it Mrs Green; her sympathies are Irish." 3

1. Kingsley to Holt, 20 May 1899, 16/4, JHP.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

This statement brings into focus the important theme of Irish attitudes to Africa. It will be seen in the subsequent chapters dealing with particular issues that Irish members of Parliament were always critical of Government policies and administrative measures adopted in West Africa. Their opposition can be variously interpreted. Irish criticism of Imperial method in West Africa was part of a wholesale Irish obstructionist method. They tended to oppose almost everything that the Government did. As lovers of freedom, however, their criticism was part of the Irish struggle for independence. Moreover, it had a psychological reaction on the whole question of Irish Home Rule; by criticising the administrative inadequacies of Imperialism in far-away lands, they served to make the most immediate ones of Ireland always a living issue even when they were not formally discussed. But one can never escape from positting the hypothesis that as much as Irish members made opportunist use of African problems, it should not be denied that several generations of colonial experience must have bred some anti-imperial attitudes and definite philosophies of liberalism and good government, however Gladstonian some of them still remained in their criticism of Imperial expenditure.

This anti-Imperialism was, however, a deviation from the norm within the Third Party. Mary Kingsley with Holt and Morel were Imperialists who wanted reforms in

order that the West African empire might be made profitable both to Britain and the Africans. Mrs Green, on the other hand, was an anti-Imperialist of the most extreme kind. Her anti-Imperialism probably reflected her natural radicalism. With her liberal associations and academically-oriented mind, her opposition to exploitation might have been a product of some abstract idea of humanitarian liberalism. But as a victim of British Imperial experiment in Ireland, Mrs Green saw Africans as identical tools in the same Colonial crucible. Her pro-African zeal was well understood by Holt and Morel, both of whom resisted Mary Kingsley's efforts to estrange them with her. Later in her career, she cooperated with Morel in his campaigns for Irish Home Rule, and in the counter-blast against Sir Edward Carson's importation of arms. On the death of Holt, it was Mrs Green who wrote one of the most penetrating of the obituary notices.¹

Mrs Green's practical ability was, however, not invincible. She failed along with others to purify a society of which she was a Vice-President from the internal ills which perverted its humanitarian ideals. Founded in 1900 to propagate those ideals which had inspired Mary Kingsley, the African Society soon confined itself almost

1. Mrs Green, 'A Founder of the Society', op. cit.

entirely to geographical and anthropological pursuits which ~~were~~ a restricted conception of its true function. Even this academic pre-occupation was a redeeming feature, since it could be argued that African anthropology was a major part of Kingsley's life effort. The true aims of the Society were soon undermined by interested adventurers. Meetings of the Society soon became occasions for banquets and financial demands from members. After attending an annual meeting of the Society in 1907, Holt, a Vice-President, wrote to Morel in disgust: "The report will amuse you. The work of the past year has been chiefly dinners and subscribers. This would seem to be the chief objects of a Society founded to commemorate Mary Kingsley and to promote her practical ideals. She would have abhorred these things....."¹ In July of the same year, Holt advised Morel to inform Sir Harry Johnston, (the President), "who has been too easy-going with these people" that "there is a game of some sort on, which is not in the public interest or to do honour to the name of Mary Kingsley."² Holt continues in the same letter:

".....He surely ought to see that Jones and Shalford have some game on. That bringing Ralph Moor and Ommaney and Sir Alfred Jones on the Council so unexpectedly, so suddenly, is not because of any love they bear to the Society, but because they think

1. Holt to Morel, 26 June 1907, F.8/3, EDMP.

they can make some use of it for their own ends. This Society has been going for years and not one of them has taken the least interest in it; but now all of a sudden they see an opportunity of gaining something for their own ends, and therefore, they come in a crowd....." 1

As we have seen, Holt had opposed Morel's wish to take office in the Society because connection with "respectables" there might influence his journalistic independence. He advised him to warn the public against "the wire-pulling that is going on by a group of designing men."² Articles immediately appeared in the West African Mail denouncing the apathy of high-placed members of the Society to true African welfare and pointing out that interested people had sought nominations into the Council of the Society to promote their selfish ends.

However, the Society was not wholly morally effete. It had cooperated with other humanitarians to

1. Holt to Morel, 11 July 1907, F8/3, EDMP.
Shelford was a member of Messrs Shelford and Sons, who constructed most of the railways in West Africa; Sir Ralph Moon after his retirement as High Commissioner for Southern Nigeria became a businessman in London; Ommaney was a Crown Agent.
Jones maintained very close ties with the other three, forming with them what was supposed to be a business compact.
For the various allegations against the interests these men were connected with see Chap. VII.
2. Holt to Morel, 11 July 1907, F.8/3, EDMP.

procure the release of King Nana of Benin River from his exile. But Neville's commendation of the Society for this action was, in fact, an urbane censure on its shortcomings: "The West African native wants a channel where he can rely on sympathy and assistance and I hope the Society will identify itself more and more with native affairs in which direction it has a distinct and useful future."¹ The Society was never fully able to see itself playing the role of a humanitarian pressure-group. Apart from the useful journal it published, the Society proved to be a talking-house where retired governors, derelict administrators, traders and travellers in Africa exchanged views on matters almost entirely geographical. Annual meetings degenerated into banquets where its finances were squandered.² But its most unwholesome aspect, was that interested people who had business connections with Africa used their influence to secure positions in the Society and forced others more genuinely interested in the human problems of Africa to roam the corridors of power. This influence was used not always to promote African or Imperial

1. Neville to Holt, 28 July 1906 Box 7/4, JHP.

2. Volumes of the Journal of the African Society contain very interesting articles on African geography and anthropology; but very prominent were reports of banquets held and demands on members to pay up their dues.

welfare, but by probably playing on the Colonial Office sense of trusteeship, it served to gain official attention and friendship for personal material ends.

This lack of keen humanitarian conscience is perhaps representative of any generation of materialism. It was, however, also fed by a lack of sufficient Colonial intelligence. The works of Mary Kingsley, Flora Shaw¹ and other newspaper correspondents had not fully brought West Africa into a proper focus in the popular mind. Even members of Parliament did not always master their facts. Morel had broadened and deepened the Colonial horizons of some members and had wished to form a more lasting parliamentary nexus in the Kingsley style², but

1. Flora Shaw, later Lady Lugard, wrote profusely on West Africa, See E. Moberley Bell, Flora Shaw, 1852-1929 (1947).
2. Morel maintained close connection with several Labour and Liberal and Radical M.P.s. The closest to him were Sir Charles Dilke, J.C. Wedgwood and J. Cathcart Mason. Dilke came to know Morel in 1900 through the Editor of the Speaker who revealed Morel to him as the anonymous author of the Congo series. After a comparative seclusion due to Mrs Crawford's adultery case, Dilke returned to public life in 1892 M.P. for the Forest of Dean, speaking mainly on industrial, foreign and Imperial questions. For his championship of the rights of weaker races see Chaps. III and IV also Stephen Gwynn and Gertrude M. Tuckwell, The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart M.P. (London, 1917) P. 368.
See Chap. V for Wedgwood's connection with Morel.
John Cathcart Mason, M.P. (L.U.) for Orkney and Shetland 1900; he resigned in 1902 but was re-elected as Liberal in 1902, 1906 and 1910. Born 1848, was the younger son of Rigby Mason M.P. Educated at Laleham and Rugby, he later read law at the Middle Temple, was an able parliamentary hand.

in spite of their loyalty to him, Members of Parliament were already hitched to the wagon of the more traditional Exeter Hall.¹ Morel, therefore, wanted to enter parliament and via parliament to attain a position of power in order to secure his ideals. Before attempting to enter parliament, however, he felt it was necessary to visit West Africa to see what the negro was in his own home.

The details of Morel's journey to West Africa are hardly germane to the argument. He left Liverpool on 22 October 1910² and after visiting Nigeria, and Sierra Leone where he was remembered as "the white man with the straight eye", he returned to Britain in March 1911.³ The importance of the journey was great. Morel renewed his vigour after the Congo agitation had taken a great toll. He had seen the African in his natural habitat, and was now in a better position to advise or criticise the Colonial Office and the local administrations with the integrity of first-hand knowledge. The trip by way of his newspaper articles also proved financially profitable and strengthened his independence. But one of the greatest results of his visit was

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1. See Chap. IV for details of this parliamentary organisation of the humanitarians.
 2. Mrs Morel to Holt, 22 Oct. 1910, 18/7, JHP.
 3. Cocks, op. cit., Also Morel's Notes on The Travel, F1/2, EDMP.

his book, Nigeria: Its People and Its Problems.¹ It was a revised compilation of the articles he had published in the Times, but its appearance in book-form obviously excited new interest.

Although the book did not escape the censure of some educated Africans² as Morel himself knew, it went a long way to educate the English public, and to establish Morel's claim in the West African pantheon. Dedicated to the memory of Mary Kingsley, Morel showed himself as the upholder of tradition, and a faithful apostle of the Third Party. Holt's eulogy was poetic:

"If the spirits of the departed can visit our sphere, you have constantly led her spirits with you during all the years you have written and fought for the lives and liberties of the Negro in his own country." 3

H.S.W. Edwardes, a Colonial official at Bida was of the opinion that the book "stands alone as a weighty and reasoned statement of the problems we have to grapple with."⁴

1. (London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1911).

2. As will be seen in Chap. V., educated native criticism was in fact gradually being generated against Morel because of his position on the 'Land Question'. Morel had however advised Kitoye Ajasa, a Lagos lawyer, to read the book properly before firing at him. Morel to Ajasa, 4 Nov. 1911, copy F9/A-B. EDMP.

3. Holt to Morel, 9 Nov. 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

4. H.S.W. Edwardes to Morel, 25 Nov. 1911, F.9/E EDMP.

Morel, in the book and elsewhere, always tried to proffer wise and constructive advice to the Colonial Office and Colonial governments, but much of the advice, although it praised the work of the officials, often took the form in which it appeared that only Morel could carry out the necessary reforms. This view is further illustrated when Holt expressed his attitude to the projected reforms, but with the characteristic tinge of usually resigned adulation:

"Better would it be if they would put you in a position to carry them out yourself for you know your own meaning better than they will ever do and you have ideas of constructive statesmanship which I fear few of our Government have....."¹

It was, therefore, this aspiration to be in a position of direct power to effect the reforms which he advocated at home and in the empire which drew Morel to enter practical politics and aspire to Parliament. His friends Charles Strachey and Alfred Emmott² (who was now Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies) might be expected to have given him every support in his West African

1. Holt to Morel, 15 Nov. 1911, F.8/4, EDMP.

2. Emmott (Lord) Alfred (1858-1926) 1st Baron of Oldham (1911); eldest surviving son of Thomas Emmott of Brookfield, Oldham; Educated: Grove House, Tottenham B.A. (London); M.P. (Liberal) Oldham, 1899-1911; Under-Sec. Colonies 1911-14, First Commissioner for Works, 1914-15; Director of the War Trade Dept., 1915-19.

work, but the feeling began to be expressed that things might be best if Sir Charles Dilke, and after his death, Noel Buxton manned the Foreign Office, and Morel the Colonial Office. But on the death of Dilke in 1911, H.K. Hudson, his Secretary, and brother to Sir Robert Hudson, one of the chief priests of Liberalism, wanted Morel to take Dilke's place on foreign policy. Josiah Wedgewood continued to urge Morel to "come into Parliament". And after his generous gift to him, Cadbury had discerned that to fight an election would be just what Morel's "pugnacious spirit wants for a tonic."¹

Holt, for his part, wished that Morel should enter Parliament to carry out the imperial ideas of the Third Party. He tried to influence merchants, particularly those in Liverpool, not only to see Morel as a crusader in the honest and fair treatment of Africans, but also as their spokesman implementing the ideals of Mary Kingsley. Holt, moreover, believed that the wish to have Morel in Parliament was greatly emphasized by the state of affairs in Parliament itself. Praising Morel in a letter to Brabner, a Liverpool merchant, he accused both parties in Parliament of playing financial politics:

"It is a great thing to have one man with such ability; with such courage, such unselfishness,

1. Cadbury to Morel, Oct. 1912, F8/Cadbury, EDMP.

such dogged pertinacity; disinterested independence of spirit. I sometimes wish he was in Parliament where he could make his voice heard to some effect on behalf of the ideals of which he is possessed - the worst of it is, both parties in Parliament only want time servers, and people who are seeking their own selfish interests there from a money point of view. They do not want independent, honest men seeking the good of the nation as a whole, and the true interests of the Empire - They would be thinking all the time of what it would cost them to say anything in opposition to a leader of their own party. It is place and perquisites they are thinking of more than their country's good. They try to make both things serve their purpose, but not with much success for the country.....¹

To a neutral ~~advocate~~, this cynical insight into selfish motives in politics might have inspired an urge for reform, to the merchant community, however, it was significant only for its triviality. The merchants were as well committed to "perquisites". It might be, as Holt claimed in a letter to A. Black, another Liverpool merchant, that "since the days of Wilberforce we have had no such man (as Morel) in Britain who has done so much for freedom

1. Holt to Brabner, 13 July 1910, Copy 18/12, JHP.

and righteousness towards the negro races of Africa."¹; yet as it has been shown above the relation between commerce and sentiment in real life is not always apparent. Even the argument that Morel was always mindful of the welfare of traders - "those whose material interests give them a right to be considered equally with the inhabitants of the country",² not always convinced most important merchants. Morel's persistent attacks on reckless capitalism in Africa were not always well-received by people who felt that their humanitarian pretensions were being exposed. During the Land movement influential quarters even claimed that Morel's views were at variance with the mature commercial ideas of Chamber of Commerce men.³ Another reason for mercantile opposition to Morel was his attitude to Jones and the latter's antagonism towards him. Even after Jones' death, he was alleged to have already fed most of the mercantile establishment in Liverpool, Manchester and London with "fairy tales" about Morel. They were grateful to him for his Congo work, but were not over-impressed with his political aims. The

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1. Holt to A. Black, 31 Aug. 1910, Copy 18/12, JHP.
Also Thomas Holt to Morel, 21 Nov. 1907, F.9/H, EDMP.
Thomas Holt also compares Morel with Wilberforce.
 2. Holt to A. Black, 7 Sept. 1910, Copy 18/12, JHP.
 3. e.g. the attack on Morel by G.A. Moore, President of the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber, Chap. V.

attitude of the merchants can be further explained. Although John Holt had rashly condemned all parties in Parliament as selfish, it is, however, known that by 1910 the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society had formed a Parliamentary Committee dedicated to colonial problems.¹ If this much-publicised committee failed to rectify the alleged colonial abuses of the government, the merchants might have asked, though with only limited justification, what greater effort one man could show to these global problems.

It was also the composite issues which convulsed British politics at the time that also influenced mercantile attitude to Morel's political aims. Tariff Reform Agitation, the Irish Question, the German Menace, and Socialism, were severally canvassed and opposed with such fury that a man like Morel who participated in all of them could never be satisfactory to a group whose membership had various political and social philosophies. Moreover, shorn of its vague humanitarian content, the Imperial factor, although it had lost much of its national awareness since the close of the South African War, still retained its popular consciousness of economic power always present since Chamberlain harped on the policy of "developing our Estates". Most merchants, therefore were not over-

1. Treated in Chap. IV.

impressed by a creed which tended to put economic success below humanity.

Morel could not have been expected to be acceptable to all shades of opinions in face of these multiplicity of issues. Even his acquired progressive views contrasted with Holt's old-fashioned liberalism. Holt, however, advised Morel to be true to his conscience and maintain his radicalism.¹ This support, and, as has been shown, that from influential members of the Liberal Party, assured Morel's nomination as the Liberal candidate for Birkenhead. He had been proposed by James Irvine², and when he was given the assurance that the Liberals there would foot all his expenses and give him massive support, and the broad hint that the Unionist majority of 1015 for the seat in the election held in December 1910 was a fraud, Morel agreed to stand after a dexterous show of coyness.³ When on 8 November 1912, he was officially nominated as candidate, he gave a summary of his stand in British politics. He stood for equitable distribution of wealth socially produced, maximum wage standards, Irish Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, the Insurance Act, and he supported the

1. Holt to Morel, 15 Nov. 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

2. Irvine to Morel, 9 Oct. 1912, F9/ , EDMP.

3. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy, F.8/Cadbury, EDMP.

principle of the Licensing Bill of 1908. He was liberal in Concert of Europe matters; advocated friendship with Germany, though a defensive navy for Britain. He spoke and wrote against Tariff Reform, conscriptionism and isolationism. He advocated women's suffrage, diminution of the powers of the House of Lords, public control of Secret Treaties and Land Reform.¹

Although Morel had tried to widen his interest by harping on domestic and foreign policy issues, he never totally allowed the urge for political expediency at home to undermine his urge for colonial conscience. As the possibility of an election became more elusive (not held until 14 December 1918), Morel saw no electoral disadvantage in bringing home to his constituents those moral ideas which he saw were the basis of true imperialism. At the Church Congress in Southampton, on 2 October 1913, he once again supported his thesis for African land rights, and warned the public against the policy which led to "social misery and a landless proletariat", against "forcing loans upon African natural rulers in the interest of cosmopolitan finance and for the greater profit of armament firms". He spoke against imposing European culture and legal norms and institutions upon African societies not suited for them. He chastised the Church

1. Birkenhead News, from Nov. 1912 to Sept. 1914 contain Morel's speeches. See also Morel's Notes for the speeches. F2/1, EDMP.

for the "staggering abruptness" with which it transmitted exotic ideas and habits to Africa.¹ In 1908, Holt had expressed the wish that John Morley, because of his speech on India Reform which had relevance to West Africa, would join their party.² Now, Morel criticized Morley's view in the Lords, that it was "impossible to prevent the condition of labourers in the tropics from being unpleasantly akin to slavery", for being tendencious, it might be "disastrous to the maintenance of a high standard of rule by the whiteman in the Tropical belt."³ Not only, therefore, was Morel practically against the physical coercion of Africans, and in support of legitimate and equitable commercial transactions; he also set a theoretical high standard of colonial ethics.

The Third Party attitudes to the forcible impact of British rule in West Africa and the effects this had on the traditional African social and political patterns will be examined in subsequent chapters.⁴ But even their attitudes to the European colonial structure and to the various Colonial Officials give an insight probably more penetrating than the Official sources would offer. The

1. Morel's Notes for the Speeches, F2/1, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 19 Dec. 1908, F.8/3, EDMP.

3. Morel's Notes, F2/1, EDMP.

4. See Section dealing with punitive expeditions in Chap. II.

Third Party attitude to the almost unlimited powers of the Colonial Governors was already reflected in Mary Kingsley's scheme by which power would be shared between British merchants, the African chiefs and the Colonial Office. This suspicion of the powers of these Governors was even deepened in John Holt's opinion that they were 'too vast', 'arbitrary' and 'autocratic', and had the effect of preventing the establishment of 'a properly organised system' of colonial administration. He wrote as follows in the same letter to Morel:

"....We all know that the best form of government is an autocracy, if you have the best man there; otherwise it is about the worst. You have no restrictions on his conduct, or action or policy. There cannot be a more dangerous thing than to give any man absolute power, and this is what you have in our West African Colonies....." 1

This autocracy was reflected in what he called the "avalanche of proclamations", which although they might have been drawn up for other colonies, the "mad lawyers of Downing Street" were "adapting to the West Coast."²

As will be seen later, Holt's views on the British policy of supporting the 'man on the spot' were shared by other critics. But in the absence of any other scheme which was deemed feasible at the time, these criticisms were somewhat irrelevant. It might have been

1. Holt to Morel, 14 Sept. 1910, F8/3, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 16 June, 1903, F8/2, EDMP.

suggested that there ought to exist an African Council to play the same role in African affairs as the India Council was doing for Indian matters. This argument did not always take into consideration the historical fact that although British interest in India was initially promoted by a trading company, yet there had been almost a century of direct British Government administration of that sub-continent. On the other hand, colonial administration, by commercial men, had been discredited with the revocation of the Charter of the Royal Niger Company in January 1900. As has been indicated, the attitude of the mercantile communities towards colonial problems was, moreover, never as statesmanlike as Mary Kingsley would have wished. They did not always look beyond the immediate horizon of individual economic advantages which disqualified them for permanent, long-view involvement in colonial administration.

Morel, who was no more enamoured of this fetish of the "man on the spot", than other critics were, therefore advised Holt that "until you have got the machinery to control the man on the spot, which you at present have not, the fetish is bound to exist", and should even be supported.¹ Thus although Holt and Morel found in most of the West African Governors the worst aspects of Imperial rule, they did not attack them openly. Such an

1. Morel to Holt, 21 Sept. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.

open criticism would not only imbue in the Governors an antagonistic reaction detrimental to Holt's commercial transactions; it would also expose Morel as an enemy of the official colonial structure and therefore little regarded in the Colonial Office.

Thus although they disapproved of the colonial methods of several West African Governors, they refrained from outright public condemnation. Sir Ralph Moor¹ was accused of tyranny and war as High Commissioner for Southern Nigeria (where he was even connected with the business interests of Alfred Jones). When he retired as High Commissioner and involved himself in the commercial politics of the London Chamber of Commerce, the true relationship between Moor and Jones was exposed. It was believed that it was Jones who used his influence to instal Moor at the head of the African Trade Section of the London Chamber, made him a director of one or two of his companies and the London Agent of the B.C.G.A. Holt was of the opinion therefore that as High Commissioner, Crown Agent or as President of the Africa Trade Section of the London Chamber, Moor was never prepared to take an independent position,

1. Moor, Sir Ralph R. (1860-1909) K.C.M.G. 1897, High Commissioner, Southern Nigeria from 1900; retired Oct. 1903; Son of W.H. Moor, M.D. of Buntingford, Herts; Educated at home; Served in Irish Constabulary, 1881,- 91, Deputy H.C. and Vice-Consul in the Oil Rivers (Niger Coast) Protectorate, 1892; Ag. Commissioner and Consul-General, 1892-95; Commissioner & Consul Gen. 1896-1900.

much less take up a policy antagonistic to Jones 'on any subject'.¹ When Sir Walter Egerton² was appointed Governor of Southern Nigeria, Holt misjudged his 'pacific' pose, and even 'gave him broad and candid hints on administration'.³ Though 'a man of big ideas and push',⁴ 'honest' and not easily influenced by self-seeking businessmen,⁵ Egerton did not fulfil the high hopes nourished by Holt and Morel. In particular, his alleged autocratic and extravagant methods revolted against Holt's pacific and frugal conscience:

".....I have no confidence in Egerton. He comes from a bad school in East. We do not want those Eastern men in West Africa; we want to train our own men there in politics; just as we do in trade, and we should do, if we had the right men at the C.O. to do it....." 6

The personal views and qualities of other Governors or administrators determined the attitude of the Third

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1. Holt to Morel, 15 Jan. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.
 2. For the comparative roles of Moor, Macgregor and Egerton, see S.M. Tamuno, The Development of British Administrative Control of Southern Nigeria; 1900-12: A Study in the Administrations of Sir Ralph Moor, Sir William MacGregor and Sir Walter Egerton, (Unpublished London Ph.D. 1962).
 3. Holt to Morel, 5 March 1904, F8/2, EDMP.
 4. John Eaglesome to Morel, 16 Oct. 1911, F9/E, EDMP.
 5. Holt to Morel, 15 Jan. 1909, F.8/3, EDMP.
 6. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1910, F8/4, EDMP.

Party as well. Sir Percy Girouard¹ was considered to be 'good' because he believed in Indirect Rule based on his projected land settlement in Northern Nigeria, but mainly because he was "quite independent of any outside influence"², presumably the pervasive influence of Alfred Jones. The alarming information that Hesketh Bell³ intended to abandon the Indirect Rule policy and rule directly⁴, his statement at the African Society dinner on May 1911 that Northern Nigeria did not want traders, and his persistent military actions against the Munchis⁵ disaffected him with Holt. Other governors like Rodger, Probyn and Denton⁶ were not

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1. Girouard, Major-Gen. Sir Percy, K.C.M.G., R.E., 1867-1932; 1896 Director of Sudan railways; 1898-9 President, Egyptian Railway Board; 1899-1902 South African War; 1902-4 Commissioner of Railways, Transvaal and Orange River Colony, 1907-9 Gov. of Northern Nigeria; 1909-12 Gov. East African Protectorate.
 2. Holt to Morel, 15 Jan. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.
 3. Bell, Sir Henry Hesketh, G.C.M.G., 1865-1952; 1882 entered Colonial Service, West Indies; 1890-3 Gold Coast; 1894 Receiver-General, Bahamas, 1899 Administrator, Dominica; 1906-9 Gov., Uganda Protectorate; 1909-12 Gov., Northern Nigeria; 1912-16 Gov., Leeward Islands; 1916-25, Gov. Mauritius.
 4. Holt to Morel, 14 Sept. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.
 5. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1910, F8/4, EDMP.
 6. Denton, Sir George Chardin, K.C.M.G., C.M.G., F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. Governor of Gambia 1900-11; Col. Sec. of Lagos 1888; Administered the Govt. of Lagos, 1889-91. (1851-1928). Probyn, Sir Lesley Charles, K.C.V.O. (1834-1916); Served in India during Mutiny, Special C.O. Commission in Br. Guiana 1882, Administrator of Sierra Leone. Rodger was Governor of the Gold Coast.

independent of adventurous merchants and, in particular "played up to Jones".¹ Naturally, they did not find the ideal governor in Lugard, because of his 'military administrative mind', because of his opposition to traders in Northern Nigeria and his alleged alliance with Bishop Tugwell who fanatically opposed the liquor traffic.² However, probably because of Lugard's prestige and power, Holt always counselled Morel not to attack him personally, but to "go for the Government policy" of "extravagance and waste in anything they attempt."³

The ideal Governor was William MacGregor⁴ of Lagos. He was, of course, like others in their presumed eagerness for more revenue. But he was incomparably the most favourable Governor of the lot. After a meeting with MacGregor, Holt eulogised him in a letter to Morel:

1. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1910, F8/4, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 21 Aug. 1900, F8/1, EDMP.
For Herbert Tugwell, See Chap. II.

3. Holt to Morel, 18 July, 1905, F8/2, EDMP.

4. MacGregor, Rt. Hon. Sir William, (1847-1919), P.C. G.C.M.G., K.C.M.G., C.B., M.D. (Aberdeen); Hon. D. Sc. (Cambridge), Hon. LL.D. (Edin. and Aberd.), etc., etc. Surgeon; Hg. Comm. and Consul-Gen. Western Pacific; Administrator of Br. New Guinea, 1888; Lt. Gov. 1895; Governor of Lagos, 1899-1904; Governor of Newfoundland, 1904-9; of Queensland 1909-14; F.R.G.S. etc., won several gold medals. Also Mary Kingsley Medal, 1910.

".....The more I see him the more I like him. He has a lot of humour in him. His knowledge is great, his experience of men and matters most varied and wide. His grip of many subjects is thorough. His energy and industry are wonderful. His aims are practical, his ideas sound, his humanity most praiseworthy, his native policy all we can desire. His crowning virtue is that of being a man of peace; patient and tactful and with an earnest wish to be just to his fellow creatures. He is honest beyond doubt....." 1

In his successor, Sir Walter Egerton, we have seen how high humanitarian expectations were subdued by harsh and extravagant, howbeit honest and well-meaning, methods.

This private criticism of the Colonial Governors contrasted with Morel's open friendship with the most experienced of their more humble subordinates. It was correspondence with these Residents, District Commissioners and other mature officials that provided Morel with colonial information though acquaintance with friendly educated African opinion prevented his seeing events wholly through official spectacles. He judged the officials generously, and influenced them by cultivating their esteem. H.S.W. Edwards, an official at Bida, found Morel's thoughts on the Nigerian administrations "a genuine source of deep gratification, a deep incentive to continued effort and an encouragement in the heat and dust of the work."²

1. Holt to Morel, 13 Dec. 1902, F8/1, EDMF.

2. H.S.W. Edwards to Morel, 25 Nov. 1911, F9/E, EDMF.

In Temple, Burdon and Orr,¹ Morel found "the triumvirate which has been able to steer the ship of state in Northern Nigeria through many rapids unknown to the general public who do not realise anything beyond the Governor's name, whoever the Governor may be."² Residents on leave visited him and discussed Colonial administration with him. Other residents, like W.A. Ross of Oyo and H.J. Rawlings of Ibadan, helped with illuminating local information and also tried to off-set his unpopularity when his colonial fortunes were low.³ At times, Morel's audacious, probably indiscreet regard for what he considered to be the truth, was ungraciously regarded, as when Captain Elgee,⁴ Resident of

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1. Orr (later Sir Charles), K.C.M.G. 1870-1945; 1889-1902 served in Royal Artillery in India, China and South Africa, 1903-9 Resident, N. Nigeria; 1911-17, Chief Sec., Cyprus; 1918-19 Intelligence Dept., War Office; 1919-26 Col. Sec. Gibraltar; 1926-31 Governor, Bahamas.
Burdon, Major (later Sir) John Alder, K.B.E., 1866-1933, 1897 Niger-Sudan campaign; 1898-9 Commandant, Royal Niger Constabulary; 1900 Resident, N. Nigeria; 1903-6, 1909-10 Resident, Sokoto; 1910-15 Col. Sec., Barbados; 1915-25 administrator, St. Kitts; 1925-31, Governor, Br. Honduras.
Temple, Charles Lindsay, CMG., 1871-1929; 1898, 1900 and 1901 Ag. Consul, Paraguay; 1899 Vice-Consul, Manaus, Brazil; 1901 Resident, N. Nigeria; 1910-13 Chief Sec., N. Nigeria; 1914-17 Lt.-Gov., N. Nigeria.
 2. Morel to Holt, 21 Sept. 1910, 18/7, JHP.
 3. W.A. Ross to Morel, 13 April 1912, F9/P-S, EDMP.
H.J. Rawlings to Morel, 13 Nov. 1911, F9/P-S, EDMP.
 4. Elgee, Captain Cyril Hammond, F.R.G.S. (1871-1917). British Resident at Ibadan since 1903; unmarried, served in Ashanti Campaign, Relief of Kumasi, 1900 (medal), A.D.C. and private sec. to Sir Wm. MacGregor of Lagos 1900-02; member of the Liquor Traffic Commission 1909, Travelled widely in the world; wrote an important Memorandum on Negro Education, 1906.

Ibadan, instigated the Bale to sue Morel for libel, or when Sir Matthew Nathan of Christiansborg Castle¹ caused a row and infelicitously broke off correspondence with Morel merely because his picture appeared in the West African Mail.² Thus, in spite of their private criticism of the Governors, Morel and Holt (however grudgingly) supported the colonial officials, hoping by so doing to inoculate them against the worst ills inherent in the policy of supporting the "man on the spot".

These colonial attitudes were by no means totally at variance with those of other humanitarians, but the Third Party always tried to maintain a separate identity. Thus although the humanitarian interest in the affairs of West Africa might be said to have "cut across party allegiance, and drew its strength as a political force from Free Traders, Imperialists and Socialists alike",³ the Third Party aspect of British humanitarianism was itself not an omnibus school. It had individual variations and predilections, but its leadership was really

1. Major Matthew Nathan who was sometime a Governor of the Gold Coast was, however, very close to Mary Kingsley.
2. Nathan to Morel, 25 Nov. 1903, F9/L-N, EDMP.
Morel to Nathan, 15 Dec. 1903, copy, F9/L-N, EDMP.
3. A.F. Madden, 'Changing Attitudes and Widening Responsibilities, 1895-1914' in Cambridge History of British Empire, Vol. III: The Empire & Commonwealth, Chap. X P. 345.
See Chap. III.

impregnated with a few of "the last representatives of the Old Liberal Party of Retrenchment and Reform".¹ They regarded themselves as different in aims and methods from other humanitarians. Although Holt and Morel were Vice-Presidents of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, they thought very little of that body, regarding them as not only ignorant of African affairs² and therefore often allowed their enthusiasm to outrun their knowledge, but also as a spent force, particularly after the death of Fox Bourne³. In any case, Mary Kingsley had spread in Britain and West Africa, the idea that John Holt alone was worth more than ten Aborigines' Protection Society men.⁴

From 1895, when that spirit of imperial expansion and consolidation was supported by a political and racist bastardization of Darwin's biological discoveries, till 1915 when death removed John Holt from the humanitarian

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1. Kingsley to Holt, 21 June 1899, 16/4, JHP.
Gradually, however, with new influences, its political horizon widened. Thus it contained an old-fashioned liberal like Holt as well as radicals like Morel and Wedgewood.
 2. See Chaps. III, IV and V for their disagreements.
 3. Morel to Holt, 1 April 1909, 18/6, JHP.
 4. Kingsley to Holt, 15 Sept. 1898, 16/2, JHP.
Letters of R.B. Balize to Kingsley and articles published in Lagos at that time seemed to indicate that Kingsley's lessons were 'going home' to the natives of West Africa.

scene, the Third Party advocated reforms in West African Colonial affairs. For her part, Mary Kingsley loved 'natural' Africans, but her attempt to construct colonial and anthropological theories in face of her natural inability for that method often led her to literary and conceptual 'nonsense',¹ which then induced some West Africans to suspect and attack her.² But although she loved Africans, she loved British traders more, and if the former were to be saved from the rapine of their foes, they must be subjected to the rule of British traders, and if this proved impossible, she found no necessity in championing a cause which was not only hopeless but also of secondary importance.³ With Morel, who had first thought that Holt was not a sure friend⁴, and Holt whose support for the

1. Flint, Re-assessment, P. 101.

2. Rev. Mark C. Hayford, in 1904 his Mary H. Kingsley from an African Standpoint attacking Mary Kingsley. He discusses the vexed question of whether the black man is necessarily the intellectual inferior of the white. Criticising Kingsley's views on Africa and its people, Hayford alludes to her statement 'that the blackman could never be equal to a really great white man', and that the 'mental difference between the two races is very similar to that between men and women among ourselves'.

3. Kingsley to Holt, 20 May 1899, 16/4, JHP.

4. In 1904, Morel had written thus to Alfred Emmott: "With regard to Liverpool friends, I have none, I thought I had one in Mr Holt, but when put to the test, he has failed me." Morel to Emmott 11 April 1904, F8/EDMP. This was a reference to Morel's early efforts to interest Holt in the CRA.

former was even to prove "too eulogistic"¹ as time went on, the Third Party leadership virtually took the form of a family compact.²

Excepting the Irish deviation, they were all imperialists, but of the reformist hue. Their criticism of the imperial methods of the Colonial Office, Colonial officials and reckless commercial adventurers, did the imperial cause some good; not merely through any easy and straight-forward application of their doctrines, but in making Imperialism dramatic and controversial, and therefore emphasising its morality at a time when emphasis on consolidation and method of rule was becoming almost more important among conscientious men than the idea of mere territorial acquisitions. They advocated the rights of the West Africans in forceful terms, and preached against the "Jesuitical doctrine of killing in order to do good."³ Although they at times pretended to speak for God as well, yet they represented one of the most direct sources through which the Imperial doctrine of trusteeship was finally formulated in clear terms.⁴

1. Morel to Holt, 21 Sept. 1910, 18/7, JHP.

2. Holt had put in £1000 during the national presentation to Morel for his Congo work. Also it was Holt who left Morel an annuity of £100 from 1915.

3. Holt to Morel, 28 Sept. 1905, F.8/2, EDMP.

4. In 1913, Leonel Curtis wrote Morel copious letters soliciting Morel's views on the idea and practice of trusteeship.

Curtis to Morel, 31 Jan. 1913, F9/A-C, EDMP.

Curtis to Morel, 29 April 1913, F9/A-C, EDMP.

Therefore, when Mary Kingsley left the scene, her spiritual influence never departed from her followers. Incapacitated by old age and incurable imbecility,¹ Holt possessed till his end, the antique zeal of a crusader. And with Morel (soon to divert his attention to foreign affairs when his colonial counsel was no more) the Third Party fought, like Peelites, in obedience to their tenets; for the "true welfare and progress of our protected subjects: wards whom we have a solemn moral duty as Trustees under Providence...."².

1. Although Morel thought otherwise, (Morel to Holt, 1 July 1910, 18/7, JHP.) by 1910 there had been a remarkable decline in Holt's mental and physical powers: the 'old friend, the strong strenuous thinker, and worker, is gone' (Holt to Morel, 13 June 1910, F8/4, EDMP.)

2. Holt to Morel, 12 Nov. 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

CHAPTER III.EXETER HALL AND TRADITIONAL CONSCIENCE.

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Apart from the Third Party, two other main humanitarian movements also watched over the interest of West Africans during the imperial era. The Anti-Slavery Society persevered in its old efforts to stamp out slavery and the slave trade. The Aborigines' Protection Society continued its traditional role as watch-dog for aboriginal rights. In order properly to understand the attitudes of these movements to contemporary West African affairs it is necessary to sketch their antecedents.

The APS could be said to have formally antedated the ASS because after the Emancipation Act of 1833, which was mainly a result of the efforts of the Anti-Slavery Society, the British public was painfully deluded into believing that the crusade against all manner of slavery had been won; the Emancipators could as well chant their Nunc Dimitis.

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1. Two other societies quietly cooperated with Exeter Hall. "The Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man", based mainly in Somerset, was fairly active in the early 1890's. With Miss Catharine Impey as its Secretary, this Quaker - influenced movement published a journal called Anti-Caste. Its main function was to look after the interest of the 'coloured' population in Britain (vide MSS Brit. Emp. S20 E5/7-8). Also the African Aid Society founded in 1903 cooperated with the APS.

The ASS was, therefore, mistakenly dissolved. It was soon realised, however, as Sir Robert Peel put it in 1840, that British people had done "no more than rescue their own character from the degradation in which the slave trade (and slavery) had involved them."¹ The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was necessarily reconstituted in 1839 to continue its work for "the universal extinction of Slavery and the Slave Trade and the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Enfranchised population in the British possessions, and of all persons captured as slaves."²

However, in 1837, before the ASS was reconstituted, the Aborigines' Protection Society had been born. It was formed through the initiative of philanthropists and Quakers who believed that if

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1. Q. in John Harris, A Century of Emancipation, (London, 1933) P.89. For the early struggle for Emancipation; Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (New York, 1944); R. Coupland, The British Anti-Slavery Movement (London, 1933).
 2. From the Constitution of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1839; Section II.

was equally important to befriend and watch over other aboriginals than those really enslaved. Of these humanitarians Dr. Thomas Hodgkin was one of the most zealous. He had nourished a deep veneration for William Penn, the Quaker, and this probably inspired him to devote his life to carry on Penn's humane and Christian policy towards aboriginal races. It was mainly at Hodgkin's instigation, and as a result of deliberations at informal gatherings of Friends, in which he actively participated, that in 1835 Thomas Fowell Buxton, the reformer, obtained the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons "to consider what measures ought to be adopted with regard to the native inhabitants of countries where British settlements are made, and to the neighbouring tribes, in order to secure to them the due observance of justice and the protection of their rights, to promote the spread of civilization among them, and to lead them to the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian religion."¹ This Select Committee, with which Dr. Hodgkin and his associates cooperated as a sort of outside committee, and which was thus in one sense the

1. Quoted in H.R. Fox Bourne, The Aborigines' Protection Society: Chapters in Its History. (London, 1899) P.3.

parent, in another the offspring of the APS,¹ sat through three sessions, and after collecting a great mass of valuable evidence, presented an elaborate report to Parliament in June 1837.²

It is important to indicate some of the recommendations of this Parliamentary Report because they formed, to a great extent, the ideals which always inspired members of the Society. The first of the nine recommendations placed the protection of aborigines on the Executive; in other words, Governors and not the legislators of each Colony, should have authority for decision on all questions affecting the interests of aboriginal tribes, because "the legislative body was virtually a party and therefore ought not to be a judge in such controversies." Contracts for service were to be limited, while no vagrancy laws or other regulations should be allowed, which might cripple the energies of the aborigines by preventing them from selling their labour at the best price, and at the market most convenient to them. It spoke out

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1. John Harris, op. cit., tends to give the honour of founding the APS to the first T.F. Buxton; but Fox Bourne is inclined to emphasise the role of Dr. Hodgkin.
 2. It is said that the youngest member and one of the most energetic in the Committee was William Ewart Gladstone, who, probably, wrote the first draft report.

against the sale of ardent spirits. With regards to "Native Lands", it declared that "so far as the lands of the Aborigines are within any territories over which the dominion of the Crown extends, the acquisition of them by H.M's subjects, upon any title of purchase, grant or otherwise, from their present proprietors should be declared illegal and void". It was against the acquisition of new territories without the sanction of the Home Government, while advocating the provision of religious instruction and adherence to simple forms of justice understood and agreed to by the chiefs. It, however, declared it "inexpedient" that treaties should be frequently entered into between the local Governments and the tribes in their vicinity because "compacts between parties negotiating on terms of such entire disparity are rather the preparatives and the apology for disputes than securities for peace; as often as the resentment or the cupidity of the more powerful body may be excited, a ready pretext for complaint will be found in the ambiguity of the language in which their agreements must be drawn up, and in the superior sagacity which the European will exercise in framing, in interpreting and in evading them." Lastly, the report urged that, missionaries, "those gratuitous and

invaluable agents," should be protected and assisted, but concludes with a judicious advice for the missionary: "It is necessary that with plans of moral and religious improvement should be combined well matured schemes for advancing the soçial and political improvement of the tribes, and for the prevention of any sudden changes which might be injurious to the health and physical constitution of the new converts."¹

These recommendations immediately became a charter of aboriginal rights which the Society tried to implement. From 1837 until his death on 5th April 1866, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin ably directed the APS towards these ideals. Assisted by L.C. Chamarovzow and from 1854 by F.W. Chesson, Hodgkin for thirty years largely controlled the Society. According to Chesson, Hodgkin's labours were ceaseless in attending Committee and general meetings of the Society, in keeping up a world-wide correspondence both with the oppressed, and in the preparation of memorials to

1. Vide, John Harris, op. cit., Pp. 77-80. These are also discussed in G.R. Mellor, British Imperial Trusteeship, 1783-1850, (London 1951).

British and other Governments and colonial officials for the mitigation of these colonial and aboriginal calamities.¹

Apart from his diligence, it is the example of humane and disinterested duty which Hodgkin left for his followers that was particularly fruitful. An informant who immensely cherished his work noted that "he gave up his time, ability and fortune to succour the needy and to defend the oppressed," knowing "nothing of expediency as separated from the highest moral considerations." He left a legacy of inflexible adherence to truth, a noble reverence for justice which did not permit of "one law for the white man and another for the black, or of a graduated scale of morality by which the exact measure of the natural rights which subject races" might enjoy was "to be determined by the varying shades of their complexion, or by the difference between their social condition and that of a more favoured people."² These truly

1. Fox Bourne, APS, P.14; Aborigines' Friend Dec. 1896.

2. Ibid.

describe the character and temperament of the founder of the APS, but they are more significant as an example of conscientious effort: the spirit which animated him and his colleagues became in part a traditional ideal which was incumbent on his successors to carry on with honest zeal.

At the same time, another feature of the Society which persisted throughout the years was already apparent. This was the attempt to unite divergent politicians¹ so as to form one humanitarian front in parliament. This important strategy was particularly marked by the energetic organisation of F.W. Chesson, the APS Secretary from 1866 till 1888, who worked with "rare sacrifice" for the achievement of this invigorating objective.²

Yet the APS and the ASS, although to some extent composed of the same persons, existed as

1. For example, Sir Robert Nicholas Fowler, the Treasurer of the Society at this time was an active member of the Conservative Party; but he was greatly supported and helped by Chesson who was to the last an ardent Liberal. When Chesson died, Fowler completely endorsed Gladstone's obituary notice. Vide AF July 1897.
2. Fox Bourne, APS, P. 26, AF July 1897.

separate bodies until 1909. They at times cooperated, but often adopted different lines of policy respectively in tune with their political strategy or pedantic attachment to original ideals. In 1889, the ASS had refused to cooperate with the APS in publicly denouncing slavery, because according to the ASS Secretary, Charles Allen, the ASS wished to give the Anti-Slavery Conference¹ sitting at Brussels an opportunity to do its work. On 13 January 1890, Charles Allen again told the APS that the ASS could not attend the "Mansion House Conference" called by the APS to discuss the Liquor and the Arms² Traffic. The ASS, as will be seen later, was suffering from several internal and external combinations of circumstances, and saw its success in calling the Brussels Conference as an opportunity to demonstrate that it had neither become effete nor abdicated its primary duty. On 16 January 1890, Charles Allen denied the APS view, embodied in a resolution, that liquor was "one of the two prominent causes and agencies³ of slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa." But when

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1. Charles Allen to Fox Bourne, 20 Dec. 1889 copy in ASS papers.
 2. Charles Allen to Fox Bourne, 13 Jan. 1890. (ibid.)
 3. Charles Allen to Fox Bourne, 16 Jan. 1890. (ibid.)

later in that year Holland was suspected of refusing to sign the Declaration appended to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, Charles Allen then sought the cooperation of the APS because, as he claimed, it was important "that public opinion be raised, Deputation sent to Salisbury to strengthen the hands of England."¹ This idiosyncratic opportunism of the two movements was therefore always undermined by forces not within their control. But the fitful effort made for closer union after Chesson's death in 1888 was nullified as Fox Bourne became the new APS Secretary.

A new chapter in the history of the APS, therefore opened when the mantle of Elisha fell on H.R. Fox Bourne at the beginning of 1889. Henry Richard Fox Bourne was one of the eight sons of Stephen Bourne. In 1833 Lord Melbourne's Government had sent Stephen Bourne to Jamaica to supervise the apprenticeship system which was to prepare the negroes there for complete freedom. It was there that on 24 Dec. 1837 Henry was born. Descended from an old Puritan family that had produced some public-spirited

1. Charles Allen to Fox Bourne, 27 Oct. 1890, (ibid.) The Times 23 Oct. 1890.

citizens, his father, Stephen Bourne was well known in the early 19th Century as one of the more idealistic spirits in the Whig circles, having associated with Caroline Fox, the niece of Charles James Fox, in Sunday School work and well-meaning philanthropy. With Zachary Macaulay and Lord Brougham he had denounced slavery. It was for these humanitarian activities at home that Stephen Bourne was sent to Jamaica in 1833.

The family afterwards spent a few years in British Guiana. Henry was between 10 and 11 years old when his parents returned to London in 1848. After attending a private school there, he entered London University in 1856, since at this time Oxford and Cambridge barred non-conformists, joining classes at King's College and the City of London College. He is said to have attended, at University College, London, lectures on English Literature and History given by Henry Morley, whose intimate friend and assistant he afterwards became. In 1855, he entered the War Office as a clerk, devoting his leisure to literary and journalistic work. This was congenial to him because his father who had in December 1826 founded the World, the first Nonconformist and exclusively religious journal in England, had

always maintained a respectable association with journals and journalists. Henry regularly contributed to the Examiner, an organ of advanced radical thought, of which Henry Morley was editor, and also wrote for Charles Dickens in Household Words.¹

From 1862, H.R. Fox Bourne started his independently published works some of which show painstaking research and capacity for prolonged effort. In 1868, he published his English Seamen Under the Tudors. Although written in a straight-forward narrative style almost barren of comment and criticism, his imperial attitude is nevertheless discernible. He extols the heroic adventures of the founders of British colonial empire, 'the naval supremacy of England over the nations of Europe', and the transformation which made 'the little island of Britain', 'a rich and powerful nation'.² In the second volume of the same book, Fox Bourne praises 'the bluff, dare-devil seamen of the time of Elizabeth', 'who saved England from the danger that threatened her at the hands of ambitious Spain', rejoicing at 'the establishment of a British

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1. Vide DNB for Sketch. Also the Times 5, 6, 8, 11 Feb. 190 AF May 1909.
 2. H.R. Fox Bourne, English Seamen Under the Tudors, (London, 1868) Vol. I. P. vii.

Empire spreading all round the globe, a hundred times as great as Britain itself, through which were to be disseminated all those blessings of civilization and good government¹ The Romance of Trade, published in 1871, though a romance, portrays Fox Bourne's philosophy of trade. He welcomes the services rendered by science to trade, discusses the hindrances and stimulants which political action would offer to trade which culminate in his admiration of the Cobden Treaty. His later opposition to monopolies was already foreshadowed in this work which shows his vast knowledge of the history of monopolistic practices - To Fox Bourne these 'curious political interference with trade' might be tolerated when they were 'harmless', but must be withdrawn when they ceased to be beneficial to the community.² The tone of these works is somewhat uncritical; but in harmony with the then popular narrative style. His patriotism is nevertheless portrayed in his praise of Englands' commerce and colonial expansion.

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1. Fox Bourne, English Seamen op. cit. Vol. II, P. 307.
 2. Fox Bourne, The Romance of Trade (London, 1871) Pp. 1-22; 96-137; 138 - 164; 165 - 196.

Having retired from the War Office in 1870, Fox Bourne used the money granted him in lieu of a pension to purchase the copyright and control of the Examiner, but the paper proved in his hands a financial failure, and was disposed of in 1873. He spent much of the next two years on a Life of John Locke which he published in 1876. From 1876 to 1877, he was editor of the Weekly Despatch which under his auspices well maintained its radical independence. Though a Home Ruler, Fox Bourne opposed Galdstone's Home Rule Bill of 1885 because of its proposal to retain Irish members at Westminster. This led to his retirement from the editorship. His confirmed Liberal views were always readily discernible but they became ever more rigid and dogmatic when he ceased to be a political journalist and became the propagandist of the¹ Aborigines Protection Society.

It was in 1889 that he began his Secretaryship of the APS; and it is admitted even by unfriendly critics that in almost all the delicate work undertaken by the Society in the twenty years he virtually led it, he was not wanting either in sincerity or responsibility. His knowledge of "Native Questions" became unique.

1. DNB.

Public men resorted to him as to an encyclopaedia. His acquaintance with European History and European languages enabled him to command a range of reference for his testimony which was not always available to his opponents, and gave him an advantage rarely to be claimed for enthusiasts.

Fox Bourne's interest in African affairs was both pervasive and incisive. Although he failed later in his efforts to secure the franchise for Africans in the Transvaal and Orange River in 1906, his strong protests against the forced labour in Angola and the cocoa - growing islands of San Thomè and Príncipe, helped to compel the Portuguese Government to admit the necessity for reform. He persevered in the effort of the APS to expose 'the fiendish cruelty' of the Belgian authorities towards the Congolese, directing the attention of the public to the scandals in the Congo, and protesting against unjust means which procured¹ temporary and inglorious gains in tropical Africa. In a series of pamphlets on Egyptian affairs, he denounced the alleged abuses of the English military

1. Vide Fox Bourne, Civilization in Congoland: A Story of International Wrong-Doing (London, 1903), Pp. 297, 298, 300, 303.

occupation, and advocated Egyptian self-government between 1906 and 1908. Throughout his Secretaryship of the APS, Fox Bourne's patient pertinacity in investigation and his clearness of exposition gave his views on African questions wide influence.

But some qualities in the man's character accounted for much of his successes, just as other defects produced certain failures. On the APS front, Fox Bourne developed the pugnacious spirit of a zealan^ot, though he always tried to justify his statements. A very modest man, he nevertheless possessed high courage, unflinching independence and unwearying passion for freedom. He was inspired by the same idealism which had throbbed in Clerkson and Wilberforce, matching this spiritual urge with a rare combination of thoroughness and pugnacity. A terror to 'evil-doers in Africa' and the champion of every tribe from the Cape to Nigeria, which stood in danger of commercial exploitation and reckless official methods, Fox Bourne was always insistent on Members of Parliament, airing his views and soliciting support for these without fearing intimidation. He possessed the one qualification most vital for any agitation - a single mind which was as often troubled as there were

rumours of colonial disturbances. However, he very nearly brought his power to lie mainly in denunciation, never being able to propound constructive alternative policies once he had systematically destroyed the arguments of his opponents. Gradually he began to nourish profound antagonisms towards those in power and to some of his colleagues who might have disputed the wisdom of some of his tactics; and even when he had no opponents to dispute with his agonising belief in the fruism¹ of his own opinions, however authenticated with copious facts, almost degenerated into unwholesome prejudices. Always subduing a self-consuming indignation, he gradually developed to be a nervous wreck, "not very impressive at public meetings" and speeches became a bore to him. Even some of his admirers; not to talk of the officials to whom his advocacy was directed, found him irascible and apt to take more extreme views of incidents than a reasonable interpretation could support.¹ But it must be understood that, although he lacked Morel's flare for urbane journalism, Fox Bourne was also

1. Vide The Times of 5, 6, 8, 11 Feb. 1909; AF May, 1909; Daily Mail 10 Feb. 1909; Westminster Gazette 6 Feb, 1909; Daily News 8 Feb. 1909; Justice, 20 Feb. 1909.

dealing with moral issues on which it might be impossible to take too extreme a view.

Even before Fox Bourne became its Secretary, the APS had maintained its traditional position as watch-dog for aboriginal rights, and a humanitarian pressure-group in Colonial policy. Throughout these years its role was almost always that of protest and its politics that of dissent. When in and after 1870 it was proposed to cede the Gambia to France, the APS objected to the transfer because "we cannot so easily get rid of the moral obligations which the actual possession of settlements which have been under British rule since the early part of the century imposed upon us. Upon the faith of our occupation British merchants have settled at Bathurst and carried on trade with the interior, and many thousand of coloured people, either belonging to the country or planted there as liberated Africans, have been taught to look to our flag for protection."¹ The action of the APS probably helped to procure the ^{Coast} Gold/Emancipation Ordinance of 1874, which was intended

1. Q. in Fox Bourne, the APS, P.42.
As will be pointed out later this protest shows that the APS did not always favour a 'Little Englander' Policy.

to enforce the anti-slavery provisions of the famous Emancipation Act of 1834. Almost till his death, Chesson, its keen and insistent Secretary, was officially occupied with opposing the seizure and deportation of King Jaja of Opobo to Barbados in 1888.¹

With the appointment of Fox Bourne as Secretary, the APS continued its role with more reliable intelligence even if his dynamism did not always reckon with official sensitivity. In 1889, a debate was raised in the House of Commons, at the instigation of the Society, in condemnation of a punitive expedition against the Tavieves, on the eastern side of the Gold Coast, in the previous year, when the tribe was almost ex-terminated in vengeance for the killing of a young official who had rashly interfered in a local quarrel. In 1890, in a similar debate, with reference to a "yet more murderous expedition", against an "obnoxious" chief and his followers in the Sierra Leone interior, the Government is said to have "only saved itself from the risk of defeat by apologising for the misconduct of its subordinates". As a consequence of the Society's appeals in 1891 against the incarceration of thirty-

1. These activities are enumerated in Fox Bourne's APS.

six Africans in the Gold Coast without trial, all the "political prisoners" who had not died were liberated. Other persistent appeals against the alleged official countenancing of child-slavery in the Gold Coast probably resulted in the more zealous enforcement of the law.¹

Indeed, as early as 1890, the APS was already well-known in West Africa for its tireless humanitarian campaigns on political and economic issues affecting Africans. Between 1890 and 1891, the APS so persistently memorialised the Colonial Office that the permanent officials there wondered who were the disloyal "busy-bodies" in the Gold Coast "inciting" them to these heady protests.² When, therefore, in 1891, Fox Bourne informed the Colonial Office of his intention to visit West Africa, he was discouraged from doing so. He would "not be allowed to fall into the hands of the opponents of the Government."³ Instead, he wrote to the Gold Coast Chronicle and suggested

1. Vide Fox Bourne, APS, Pp. 49 - 50.

2. Minute of 22 April 1891 by A.W.L. Hemming, CO/96/220.

3. Minute of 14 Sept. 1891 by Hemming, CO/96/220.

that "patriotic residents" in the main towns there should form local committees so as to supply beneficial information to his Society.¹ For obviously, as will be seen later, such accurate intelligence was most necessary for any just, generous, and humane government policy, but more so for proper criticism which the Colonial Official would notice. To informed protests of the Society against the Ijebu War, in the Lagos interior, in 1892, may in part be attributed the conciliatory measures that were adopted, "in lieu² of reckless slaughter," in the Egba district, though the persistence of this policy in and after 1894 in several West African districts would seem to indicate that the successes of the Society in the earlier phase were probably exaggerated.

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1. Gold Coast Chronicle 21 and 28 Dec. 1891, Letter of 13 Nov. 1891 from Fox Bourne. Vide also David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana, 1850 - 1920 (Oxford, 1963) Pp. 330-1 for the effect of Fox Bourne's letter on the people of the Gold Coast. Note, however, that in 1897, the APS described as "unwarranted" the claim by the Gold Coast Aborigines 'Rights' Protection Society (formed that year) that the former was its parent body. Vide AF July 1897.
 2. Fox Bourne, APS, P.49.

With the arrival in 1895 of Chamberlain at the Colonial Office, occasions for protest seemed to have been multiplied by his systematic and comprehensive policy of establishing British control in West Africa. The Colonial Office policy was based on two considerations. The first recognised the grim necessity of ultimately resorting to force as a means of establishing British authority, in the suppression of barbarous customs or even in the various commercial arrangements without which 'our African estates' could not properly be 'developed'.¹ Chamberlain expounded this policy when in March 1897, he told the Royal Colonial Institute that the British Humanitarians who sympathised with the fate of wicked African Chiefs rendered negative service to humanity: "...You cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition, which for centuries have desolated the interior of Africa, without the use of force; but if you will fairly contrast the gain to humanity with the price which we are bound to pay

1. H.C. Deb. 45 6 Aug. 1895, 641.
Also quoted in J.L. Garvin, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, Vol. 3, 1895 - 1900. Pp. 19-20.

for it, I think you may well rejoice in the result of such expeditions as those which have been recently conducted with such signal successes in Nyasaland, Ashanti, Benin and Nupe - expeditions which may have, and indeed have, cost valuable lives, but as to which we may rest assured that for one life lost a hundred will be gained, and the cause of civilisation and the prosperity of the people will in the long run be eminently advanced....."¹

This military attitude of the Colonial Office was, therefore, partly a reaction to situations which pacific methods could not cope with; it was also however adopted because of other related policies. The Colonial Office tended to believe that these military expeditions on one tribe would have the moral lesson of intimidating other tribes to obedience. For example in October 1899, W.H. Mercer, then a principal clerk, minuted that military operations in Northern Nigeria would "help towards the settlement of the country of Southern Nigeria by their moral effect on the natives, who are in general acquainted

1. Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, Vol. XXVIII, 1896-7, London Annual Dinner, 1897, Pp 236 - 7.
Also Charles W. Boyd Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches Vol. 11 (1914) Pp 3-4.

with and influenced by events at a considerable distance."¹ On the other hand, the Colonial Office always considered it one of its imperial functions that barbarous customs, and in particular slavery, must be suppressed. In January 1900, Reginald Antrobus minuted that "public opinion in this country requires (and in Mr. Chamberlain's opinion rightly) that imperial control over savage countries should be justified by some serious effort to put down slave-dealing."² Since the Ashanti, some Northern Nigerian Emirs, the Aros and other native 'powers' persisted in these barbarous dealings, application of force was merely logical.

However, since most of these ~~primitive~~^{un} ~~primitive~~^{punitive} expeditions were suggested by Colonial officials,

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1. Minute by W.H. Mercer (later Sir) on Moor to CO 22 Sept 1899, CO 444/2.
Mercer, W.H., 1855 - 1932, KCMG (1914) 1st class clerk CO 1896, Principal Clerk 1898; worked with the CA 1900-21; Chairman West African Currency Board, 1916.
 2. Minute by R.L. Antrobus on Moor to CO 28 Jan 1900 CO 520/1.
Antrobus, (later Sir) Reginald, KCMG, C.B.; 1853-1942; 1880-9, Private Secretary to successive Colonial Secretaries; 1889-90 acted as Governor of St. Helena; 1898-1909 Asst. Under-Sec. of State for the Colonies; 1909-18 Sn. Crown Agent for the Colonies; 1898-1909 was in charge of the West African Dept. of the C.O. though several reorganisations did not make this a permanent assignment.

they were mainly allowed because Colonial Office policy was to support the 'man on the spot'. As Antrobus minuted in 1899, the Colonial Office attitude in Africa was influenced by its practical policy:¹ "not to administer but to control administration." The Colonial Office "deliberately" left "the initiative in most matters to the local governments" and "refrained from interfering with them more than" was "necessary to secure that the Colonies shall be administered on lines which " would "meet the approval of Parliament".² This policy of supporting the Colonial officials was recapitulated by Lord Onslow³ when he addressed the African Society in March 1907:

"When I had the honour of taking a share in the Colonial Administration under Mr. Chamberlain, it was the settled policy of the Colonial Office that you ought never, except under very exceptional circumstances, to interfere with the decision and the policy of the man whom you had sent out to administer, and in return we at the Colonial Office only asked for one

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1. Minute by R.L. Antrobus on Moor to CO 14 June 1899, CO 444/1.
 2. Minute by R.L. Antrobus on W.T. Dyer to CO, 16 Sept. 1902, CO 520/16.
 3. Lord Onslow was Parliamentary Under-Sec. for Colonies from 12 Nov. 1900 till 23 July 1903.

thing, and that was that we should be kept fully and completely informed of what the man on the spot intended to do and what he advised us to do. So long as we were kept absolutely informed of what was about to be done, the occasions on which the Colonial Office interfered were of the very rarest."¹

The disastrous outcome of this policy was to make more despotic the already huge powers the Colonial ²Governors possessed. Since many of these Governors came to West Africa with previous military experience, they were more inclined to adopt military and too expeditious methods in dealing with Africans, whether the motive was humanitarian, political or economic, using the cheap military glories gained against unarmed Africans for winning military honours at home. ³This policy which was inaugurated by the Ijebu* Expedition, followed by the Ashanti Expedition of 1895, featured other disturbances provoked in the Sierra Leone Protectorate by the imposition and "reckless enforcement" of a Hut Tax and the licence ⁴accorded to an undisciplined Frontier Police. Its economic aspect was specially marked by the forcible overthrow of King Nana of the Benin River in 1894,

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1. Journal of African Society, Vol. VI, 1906-7, London pp. 304-5; Speech made by the 4th Earl of Onslow on 8 March 1907.
 2. Holt to Morel, 14 Sept. 1910.
 3. West Africa, 12 Oct. 1901.
 4. AF. Nov. 1899.

the Benin Expedition and conquest of 1896,¹ and the brutal handling of the Brass disturbances 1895.² In the various punitive expeditions against African chiefs and communities, there was a real compound of political aims and economic considerations, but the imperial humanitarian note was never lacking.

The attitude of the APS to the punitive raids was in harmony with the pacific policy advocated by unofficial bodies in Britain; but it was at variance with the hysterical pride shown by the mass of the public in the victories gained by British forces over 'barbarous' chieftains in Africa.³ While accepting that the practices of some African chiefs might be 'obnoxious', the APS nevertheless believed that "the hunting down of such

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1. For the British economic motives behind the Benin Expedition see T. Eneli, 'Ovarenmi' in Emminent Nigerians of the Nineteenth Century (Ed. K.O. Dike) (Ibadan, 1960)
 2. Vide J.E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria, (O.U.P. 1960) Pp. 187-215; E.J. Alogoa, The Akassa Raid (Ibadan, 1960); also E.J. Alogoa, The Small Brave City State (Ibadan and Wisconsin 1965) Chap. 7.
 3. There was hysterical pride in the British press over the military overthrow of African chiefs and chiefdoms. See Morning Post 11 June 1902, 13 May 1902, African Times 5 May 1902.

people, with destruction of their villages and slaughter of large numbers" could have "no civilising effect on the survivors."¹ It was particularly alarmed by the activities of the West African Frontier Force, which, it said, called "for vigilance and earnest protests from all" who held "the views of the APS."² In 1902 and 1903, it publicly condemned the WAFF and Lugard's military penetration in Northern Nigeria.³ Chamberlain might tell the Colonial Institute that "you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs," rather the APS saw this Jesuitical doctrine as "not a product of civilization but a survival of barbarism."⁴

This attitude of the APS was re-emphasised by the persistent attacks made by Fox Bourne in April 1901 on Chamberlain's "systematic and comprehensive design for the forcible development of our West African estates", which according to him, had the effect of

1. Annual Report of APS, 1901.

2. Ibid.

3. Annual Reports for 1902., 1903 also in AF Feb. 1904, AF May 1907, AF March 1907.

4. The AF of May 1907 specifically referred to Chamberlain's remarks.

"over-awing native communities who, with or without good reason, object to the arrangement by which we propose to control them."¹ He vigorously denounced the policy of sending a Mohammedan force against Pagans and vice versa because when the troops had no fighting to do they were apt to pursue mischievous ends. Moreover the employment of these troops in such a way as to satisfy their tribal or racial antagonism was objectionable, just as the enlargement of these armies was likely to prove dangerous to the general community.² Fox Bourne contended that the Colonial Office was trying to develop West Africa too rapidly, and was employing Africans forcibly for the purpose. He however observed that the APS had no objection to the annexation of West Africa by Britain, but protested against the policy of forcing trade on to the people of Africa. He denied the humanitarian motives behind the attack on Ashanti and saw it as

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1. Fox Bourne, Blacks and Whites in West Africa (pamphlet). Also in "Star" April 1901.
 2. Fox Bourne 'Against Employing Black troops in West Africa' in West African News, 3 April 1901.

primarily economic: "Gold was at the bottom of the business.....It remains to be seen whether real and lasting advantage to either whites or blacks has been procured by our recent acquisitions of territory and assertions of authority. In that case, perhaps, it will be found that there is more profit in utilising the huge hardwood trees that cover some 12,000 sq. miles of forest land, and in cultivating the ground thus made available, than in grabbing at the gold, of which there are reported to be rich stores in portions of the country."¹ In October of the same year, Fox Bourne accused the British colonial authorities in West Africa of "nigger-hunting," maintaining that most of the expeditions were ostensibly for the suppression of slavery, human sacrifice, and savage institutions, while in essence their real² object was the promotion of British commerce.

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1. Fox Bourne 'Against Employing Black troops in West Africa' in West African News, 3 April 1901.
 2. Fox Bourne, in a lecture on 'Punitive Expeditions' in Oct. 1901 under the auspices of the Liverpool Peace Society.

Although men like Sir Alfred Jones sat on the fence and even supported the policy of ultimate use of force,¹ commercial opinion was in general opposed to this forcible method of promoting commerce. John Holt wrote^a series of letters to Morel inducing him to publish attacks in West Africa on the Government policy of punitive expeditions. He opposed this policy because it was financially expensive,² economically disastrous to trade, since "it is bad policy to kill people we want to trade with...". It was inhuman, and destructive of African political and social institutions.³ He was so alarmed by the series of punitive raids in West Africa that he bitterly criticised the attitude of the governing classes to the Africans. " - They are a bad lot and are turning the African into a driven brute, a thing to kick, bully, rob and enslave rather than follow the old ideal of kindness and patience and respect for

1. West Africa, 4 Jan 1902.

2. Holt to Morel, 7 Aug. 1900.
Holt here laments that Chamberlain would support the operations of WAFF by asking for a Parliamentary grant.

3. Holt to Morel, 29 Dec. 1900, F8/1, EDMP.

truth and right. This jingo craze is making us regard our friends as creatures to be despoiled and ruled by force. This intolerant Imperialism is a cruel selfish devil.¹..." He was of the opinion that the true results of marching through West Africa with armed bands to pacify it would be smoking villages and homeless people; sad specimens of the Pax Brittanica.² He alleged that the suppression of slavery and other African rebellion was used to justify punitive raids. Holt wrote to Morel:

"They go on smashing and announce everything now settled but you soon find the smashing and settling have to be done again. We must have these brave soldiers to banquet when they come home and tell them how proud we are of them.....It is part of the new Imperialism. I will not believe the slaves being set loose by thousands until I have proof. I know how these bloody scoundrels cry slavery and native atrocities in order to justify their brutalies and lack of tact, patience or sympathy towards the natives....." ³

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1. Holt to Morel, 28 April, 1901, F8/1, EDMP.
 2. Holt to Morel, 23 April, 1901, F8/1,
 3. Holt to Morel, 26 April 1901, F8/1.

A leader in West Africa summarised the views of the merchants by criticising the 'wrong policy' of punitive raids: "Commercially, it is not practical to shoot your customer. Politically, it is not practical in a country like West Africa to destroy the native form of society, ... and break the power of the chiefs - Financially, it is not practical, for it means the piling up of debts and the ultimate impoverishment of the country"¹ Morel, who might have presented the merchants' case in the leader referred to, was not out of tune with the views of the APS on these punitive expeditions. He wrote:

"The country (i.e. British West Africa) needs political rest...It should be our object to intermeddle as little as possible with native institutions, abide with scrupulous exactitude to both the spirit and the letter of our treaties with the Chiefs; develop the native peoples along the lines of their own civilisation.... use conciliation in preference to dictation.... Patience, more patience, and again patience that ought to be the cornerstone of British policy in West Africa"²

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1. West Africa 12 Oct. 1901.
 2. Affairs of West Africa, (London 1902) Pp. 15-16.
For Morel's further attacks on the punitive expedition see also his 'Conditions of Rule in West Africa' in AF July 1901, A speech delivered on 11 June 1901 to The Womens National Liberal Association; 'British Policy in Ashanti' in Pall Mall Gazette 8 Jan. 1901. Morel here concludes that "the two things which British West Africa requires are peace and administrative reforms."

These criticisms echoed in the House of Commons. On 23 February 1903, Alfred Emmott, Liberal Member for Oldham, drew the attention of the House to reports in the Morning Post of that day, expressing dismay at what he felt were purposeless military expeditions in Sokoto and Southern Nigeria.¹ The following month, John Ellis² forced Chamberlain to proclaim that no charge was expected to fall on the National Exchequer during the financial year 1903-1904 in consequence of what Ellis called "avoidable military operations" in Nigeria.³ On 2 June 1904, T.W. Russell⁴ told the House how Trenchard, an officer in Southern Nigeria, had attacked the natives of Ibibio and the Ohuhu country and burned six villages.⁵ The Unionist Government

1. H.C. Debs. 45, 1903, vol.CXVIII, 493.

2. Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward, P.C. 1906. J.P. D.L. Liberal M.P. for Rushcliffe, Notts. since 1885; Parl. Under-Sec for India, 1905-6. Born 1841. Managed Colliery. Company Director. Died 5 Dec. 1910.

3. HC Debs. 4S 1903. Vol. 122, 1629.

4. Russell, Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Wallace, 1st Bt. Cr. 1917; P.C.; (1841-1920); Educated at Madras Academy, Cupar, Fife; Settled in Ireland 1859; Sec. of various Temperance organisations; Liberal M.P. for S. Tyrone 1886-1910; N. Tyrone, 1911-18; Interested in Irish Land Question.

5. HC Debs. 4S 1904 Vol. 135, 58.

always justified these expeditions as necessary expedients if barbarous customs were to be eliminated. Not always convinced by the Government's case, the Liberals themselves when they came to power persisted in the same policy of punitive measures, and justified it with the same arguments they had rejected while in¹ opposition. On the 1st March 1906, James O'Kelly referred the Commons to a large number of punitive expeditions mounted against natives of Southern Nigeria during 1904-5," in which large number of natives were killed and wounded, villages destroyed, cattle and goods seized and carried away; and trade deteriorated."² The explanation then given by Winston Churchill did not lack the imperial humanitarian motives, but was hardly regarded as authentic or convincing; a few weeks later J. Cathcart Wason implored the Government to discourage punitive

1. O'Kelly, James, M.P. (Nationalist) County of Roscommon since 1895; born 1845; Son of John O'Kelly of Roscommon. Ed. at Dublin Univ.; Sorbonne; Served in French Army (Siege of Paris), in Cuba, USA against Indians; travelled in Mexico; formerly war correspondent of Daily News. M.P. County of Roscommon 1880-85; N. Roscommon, 1885-92. Died 22 Dec. 1916.

2. H.C Debs, 4S. 1906, Vol. 152. 1280, 1281.

expeditions.¹

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It must be pointed out, however, that much as it would have been more constructive according to Dr. Blyden, to replace "Maxim guns and Martini rifles" by a wholesale war on tropical diseases,² much of these criticisms were either sentimental, selfishly inspired or utterly myopic.

It might seem ungracious to undermine "The grounds of humanity"³ on which the APS and other humanitarians built their case by referring to the fecund accretions of tribal barbarities which these expeditions helped to eliminate. But even the attitude of the Chambers of Commerce was no more humanitarian than it was short-sighted. The merchants saw that punitive raids caused wars which led to commercial regress and they opposed them forgetting that out of temporary turmoil would emerge a more lasting stability and order. By emphasizing the welfare of Africans the merchants tried to give their intelligent self-interest astute legitimacy. But when the same

1. HC Debs. 4S. 1906, Vol. 155, 497, 498.

2. An address by Dr. Blyden before the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber on 9 Sept. 1901 in West Africa, 12 Oct. 1901; also by Blyden, West Africa before Europe (London, 1905) P.35-6.

3. Annual Report of APS, 1902, AF Feb. 1904.

Africans stood in the way to their complete commercial sway, as in the case of King Jaja, the same merchants championed the equally myopic policy¹ of African destruction.

The contrast between the traditional emotionalism of the APS and its allies, and the interested though practically reasonable, motives of the Third Party, was bitterly marked when the Liquor Traffic to West Africa caused an open crisis among the humanitarians. Temperance had always been an issue which touched on the sensitivity of a large portion of English Society. As a dynamic factor dividing the political opinions of men as well, it had always aroused the sentiment and emotions of people,² often generating impetuous reactions, and obscuring a sober calculation of what was possible. Opposition to the Liquor Traffic in West Africa was a reflection of the traditional humanitarian conscience for temperance. Supported by other groups

1. For the opposition to Jaja, See Flint, Goldie, op.cit.

2. For the significance of temperance in British politics, see R.C.K. Ensor, 'Some political and economic interactions in later Victorian England.' Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th Ser. XXXI (1949), 17-28. Also A.F. Madden, op. cit., P.339.

who saw an opportunity to deal with their commercial rivals, the Anti-Liquor campaigns almost immediately tarnished the popular image of Liverpool merchants who engaged in the trade; other people who supported them stood the danger of a sullied reputation. The West Coast trader came to be regarded as "a thoroughly bad lot of unprincipled men who have been driven to abandon the slave trade by outside power and are now engaged in killing off the natives with spirits."¹

It must be emphasised, however, that the Liquor traffic in West Africa was a very old branch of trade, flourishing in some parts of the coast even before the British occupation. It developed as part and parcel of the general barter trade, almost rivalling arms and ammunition as the most important means of exchange in West African trade system. A trader who went into West Africa without "trade spirits" to exchange for the raw materials which the Africans gathered and cultivated must surely be a novice in the Coast trade for he would soon learn

1. Kingsley to Holt, 27 Nov. 1897, 16/1, JHP.

the futility of his venture.¹ Another point worth mentioning is that even before the white man brought 'trade spirits' to Africa, the West African already drank fermented alcoholic beverages obtained from various species of palm trees, guinea-corn, maize, millet and other cereals.² But when European 'gin' came into West Africa, it was quickly admitted as an article of trade, an essential to African ceremonies, burials, and marriage festivities. By the early 19th century, however, this trade had so much become part of the African system that African chiefs cherished it as they had

1. J.E. Flint, Gold, pp 77-9.
Originally, the spirits imported were largely of Brazilian origin; but the trade was soon confined to Continental sources, being mainly products of Dutch and German distilleries. They were brought by British, French, German and African merchants engaged in West African commerce and exported from Rotterdam and Hamburg in the steamers of Elder Dempster and the German Woerman lines.

2. Times 7 July 1911.

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cherished slavery.¹ When later its scope and proportion increased with more demand, the liquor traffic was also attacked with the same crusading spirit as slavery and the slave trade had been.

The anti-liquor campaign was led by the traditional humanitarian movements, spearheaded by the Aborigines' Protection Society but gaining the adhesion of Temperance societies, particularly that of the Church of England. When in March 1887 the Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee² was formed, it crystallised into a solid body the

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1. An African Chief summarised the system of commerce as follows: "We want three things, powder, ball and brandy, and we have three things to sell, men, women and children." See T.F. Buxton The Slave Trade and Its Remedy (1840) P. 280. Also quoted by M. Perham in Lugard: Years of Authority (Collins, 1960) P. 560.
 2. Formed in 1887, the NR and L.T.UC was led by the following: President: The Duke of Westminster; Chairman: Archbishop of Canterbury; Vice-Chairman: Sir John Kennaway, M.P.; Chairman of Executive Committee: Clarence A. Roberts Esq.; Vice-Chairman of Ex. Com.: T. Morgan Harvey. Hon. Sec. Dr. C.F. Harford-Batterby, M.A. D.D. Their office was at 139, Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, Westminster.

divergent interests and doctrines inimical to the trade. The APS cooperated with the Committee in producing the most energetic and ubiquitous opposition the Liquor party had to contend with. In West Africa, the missionary allies of the APS and the United Committee who ascribed the alleged deterioration of the coastal societies to European 'gin', were in the van of temperance movements. But when the Royal Niger Company and its supporters openly endorsed these campaigns for increased duties on spirits, for their restriction and eventual prohibition, the disinterested humanitarian ethics cooperated with the opportunism of a Company whose opposition was merely a reflection of its commercial and political strategy.

The policy of the Niger Company was consistent with the dubious role of satisfying humanitarian ideals by public pronouncements, while privately it tried to maintain its commercial supremacy which was threatened by the opposition of Liverpool 'gin traders.' As a demonstration of its 'humanitarian' considerations, Taubman Goldie at the Berlin Conference had urged his colleagues to bring the liquor traffic before the powers.' In July 1890 Lord Aberdare in a speech to the

shareholders of the Niger Company had praised the^{153.}
humane role of the Company. Moreover in 1895, Goldie
had publicly advocated the total prohibition of
the trade spirits into West Africa from the
Southern frontiers of Morocco to the Northern
frontiers of the Cape Colony, suggesting methods of
practically dealing with any smuggling that might
arise. His argument for proposing prohibition was
that it was better for the commerce of West Africa
to suffer temporary diminution with the prospect
of reaping the permanent benefit which must accrue
from putting commerce on a sounder foundation. In
the same year the Company had legally prohibited
the importation of spiritous liquors, for sale or
barter into any place within its jurisdiction,
north of 7th parallel of North latitude.¹

These pronouncements and actions might
have been commendable were it not that the Company
itself was engaged in the trade. Although Goldie
had apparently pressurised his colleagues to bring
the liquor traffic to the attention of Europe, by
1886, he was asking the British Government to

1. Sir George T. Goldie, The West African Liquor
Traffic: Statement made by Sir George Goldie
to the Native Races and Liquor Traffic United
Committee, on the 27th Feb., 1895.

compensate his company for its financial sacrifices and service to keep the Niger British by granting the Company a complete monopoly of the importation of war materials and alcoholic liquor into th Niger.¹

Moreover, the effect of the Company's measure in Northern Nigeria was not really revolutionary.

Although Moslems were not always practical abstainers, the absence of ^{Kumpan} traders in that part of West Africa meant that trade in spirits or in arms there was well within manageable proportions. By publicising the abolition of liquor traffic in an area where the trade was minuscule, the Company played up its humanitarian pretensions to a public which was progressively becoming restive over the persistent rumours that the Company had terrorised its African commercial competitors. On the other hand, the action in Northern Nigeria could be understood also as a strategical defence from the economic war of those days. As Lugard pointed out, the illicit traffic in gin which reached Jebba, Egga and Lokoja from Ilorin and towns in the Western province, supplied the basis of trade to Lagos in its hinterland, and "defrauded the Royal

1. Goldie to J. Paunceforte 8 Dec. 1886,
FO/84/1879. cited by Flint Goldie, P.79.

Niger Company of a portion of its legitimate trade in its own territories." His promise that he would see to it that the Directors of the Company would take action to protect their own commercial¹ interests not only indicates the primary position of economic interest in the Company's policy but also reflected Lugard's determination to shut out traders from Northern Nigeria.

The view that the action of the Company was directed towards its own economic interests was justified by accusations, not convincingly disproved, that the Company itself indulged in the trade it publicly condemned. The Royal Niger Company must be judged more by its alleged reluctance to extinguish the trade in the lower Niger where liquor was most useful for its trade than in Northern Nigeria where few, if any, traders went in or competed with it. In January 1898, John Holt alleged that the company had been shipping out "enormous quantities" of spirits during the highwater of 1897 to avoid any duties which (as the charter was expected to be withdrawn) a new administration might

1. In Sir George T. Goldie, The West African Liquor Traffic, op. cit.

impose.¹ Towards the end of the same year, James Pinnock, who had earlier been a Director of the Niger Company, also alleged that in the first three months of the year, the Company had shipped "enormous quantity of common, fiery, continental gin recently imported into the Niger Territories, which some of the highest authorities and writers have declared to have more injurious effect than the evils attendant on the slave trade of the past."² He had earlier announced in the press that the quantity of gin shipped by the Company was "too serious to be facetious".³

When the complicity of the Royal Niger Company in the liquor trade came up in Parliament, the specious arguments which Goldie had given the Colonial Office in defence of its commercial activities failed to convince people who now saw that they had been deluded.⁴ Goldie had tried "to

1. Flint, Goldie, op. cit. P.302.

2. J. Pinnock to CO. 18 Nov. 1898, CO 879/100

3. Journal of Commerce, 15 Nov. 1898.

4. For the action in Parliament see Flint Goldie.

blind" the Missionary party, including the African clergy, into conniving at the seamy aspects of the Company's administration "in the Imperial interest."¹ But the Aborigines' Protection Society, while it allowed itself to be deceived by the Company's denials, never relaxed its criticism of its trade monopoly. Since 1887, when the APS countenanced the complaints coming from African and European traders in Lagos, to 1892 when Liverpool and the Niger Company virtually fused together, the activity of the Niger Company had worried the Society. It had opposed the manner in which the Company handled the Brass disturbance of 1895, and was quietly moving towards demanding a complete withdrawal of the charter. In 1897, in a House of Commons debate, Sidney Buxton had confessed that the control of the Foreign Office over the Niger Company was practically nil, "whereas if it were placed under the Colonial Office, we should then be able to bring to bear on its administration that public opinion and public control which at present were entirely lacking."²

1. See Ayandele, op.cit.

2. A.F., May 1897.

When the cumulative pressures brought upon the Government led to the loss of the Company's Charter, the APS was jubilant over "the improved system of government" for the Niger Territories, "To be controlled from the Colonial Office instead of from the Foreign Office as heretofore"¹ The dubious altruism of the Niger Company during the Liquor crisis was reflected in a duality of attitudes: while the Company proclaimed humanitarian idealism to a public already sensitive of the implications of its trade monopoly, it at the same time privately deprecated it by engaging in a traffic which it recognised as one of the necessary guarantees of its commercial predominance.

The attitude of the Third Party was no less interested, though redeemed by its pragmatic caution. Mary Kingsley joined battle in favour of the merchants engaged in the liquor trade to West Africa because she believed that they had been unjustly misrepresented and calumnised by Exeter Hall. In spite of the unpopularity of the traffic, Kingsley courageously stood for it and publicly championed

1. Fox Bourne, APS, P.51.

what she regarded as the cause of truth and commonsense. She was neither impressed by the moral issues which the APS and the Missionary alliance raised nor interested in the so-called "gentlemanly" life which it was alleged the "grog shop" threatened in West Africa.¹ Her attitude was influenced by two considerations. She was of the opinion that the liquor sent out to West Africa was not poison and produced no "awful consequences" on the Africans.² Even if it was later proved that the liquor was not of the best quality, Kingsley maintained that when she went to the West Coast, she failed to find the Africans "a set of drunken children".³ Moreover, she believed that the liquor traffic benefitted English commerce, regarding as untrue the argument advanced by some members of the liquor and anti-liquor parties to the contrary. In January 1898 she wrote to Holt to verify this point:

"Would you tell me if I say that there is an advantage to the English trader if he sells a case of foreign gin value 2/3d, for African stuff of twice that value. One of these anti-liquor arguments is that the sale of foreign liquor is a loss to British trade; this seems to me untrue....." 4.

Convinced that the trade was neither deleterious to the

1. Kingsley to Holt, 27 Nov. 1897, 16/1, JHP.

2. Ibid.

3. Kingsley to Holt, 6 Dec. 1897, 16/1, JHP.

4. Kingsley to Holt, 29 Jan. 1898, 16/1, JHP.

African nor unprofitable to British merchants, Mary Kingsley tried (even when her friends advised her not to damage herself in the public eye by defending the liquor traffic) to save English trade from the impending wreck that threatened it "on the rock faddism".¹

Her attitude was particularly influenced by the involvement of her colleague in the traffic. But although John Holt was actively engaged in the liquor trade, he never ceased to consider African welfare. Although he was never impressed by exaggerated reports about the demoralising effects of liquor on Africans, he nevertheless wanted the African to drink liquor "of a moderate strength and an age that would make it a safe beverage".² In 1899, he had asked the Colonial Office to urge at the Brussels Conference that a basis of strength might be agreed to so that the import of all spirits above that strength might be prohibited everywhere, except in methylated form.³ When he was informed that the Brussels Conference concluded that the best solution of the difficulty was to give greater facilities for diluting spirits while in bond, and increased duties,⁴ Holt argued that this

1. Kingsley to Holt, 1 Jan. 1898, 16/1, JHP.
Kingsley to Holt, 3 March 1898, 16/1, JHP.

2. Holt to C.O. 13 May 1899 (Copy) 9/1, JHP.

3. Ibid.

4. R.L. Antrobus to Holt, 19 July, 1899, 9/1, JHP.

method would not efficaciously protect the African. He wrote to Antrobus:

"....The facilities for diluting spirits in bond and proportionate increase of duty in relation to strength will not prevent the native being supplied with this liquor fire. In the interest of the native we should give him old spirit of a strength fit to be drunk without the admixture of water sold to him as he never wishes for the addition of water whatever the strength of the spirit offered. Unless there can be a law preventing the import and sale of new and strong spirit, competition will compel importers to buy the cheapest stuff for West Coast markets. I am sorry to find the Brussels Conference has no other remedy to enforce for the native good, than that of an increase of duties. These cannot provide him with spirits of good quality or of safe strength."¹

Much as he was concerned with the quality of the liquor sent to Africa, Holt nevertheless viewed with contempt the "extreme disposition of mad prejudice" which the "madcap teetotallers" demonstrated on the issue.²

The position which Morel adopted was the very antithesis of the Royal Niger Company's role. The Company had announced that the trade was immoral and uneconomic and had proved the fatuity of its position by surreptitiously indulging in it. Morel had announced that the trade was inherently bad, had even disagreed with Kingsley on some of her arguments;³ but he supported the traffic openly because it was not practical politics to oppose it. In

1. Holt to Antrobus, 20 July 1899 (Copy) 9/1, JHP.

2. Holt to Morel, 1 Oct. 1900, F8/1, EDMP.

3. Morel, Affairs of West Africa, Pp. 234-5.

the one, humanitarianism was proclaimed even when it did not exist; in the other, it was reduced to mundane proportions to serve a more immediate necessity. Morel was also opposed to the indiscriminating fervour with which the missionaries denounced the trade, in not distinguishing between harmful and uninjurious species. He realised that the revenues of West African Colonies came largely from this traffic; and although this was no matter for congratulation on the part of the Colonial officials, yet Morel saw this trade as "the backbone of revenue" to the local administrations. If the trade was prohibited, direct taxation would be substituted; but since neither the merchants nor the Third Party wanted to see a repetition of the Sierra Leone revolt, they supported the trade in spirits as the lesser of the two evils.¹ Thus when in May 1903 at the annual meeting of the United Committee for the Prevention of Demoralization of Native Races by the Liquor Traffic, Bishop Oluwale of Lagos moved that the Governor of Lagos should "put a stop to the evil with a stroke of the pen", Morel asked the Bishop to show how.² Apart from the economic implications of abolishing the traffic in the West Coast, Morel's attitude

1. Ibid.

2. West African Mail, 22 May 1903.

was also influenced by the very nature of his relation with the gin traders. In view of the economic position of the West African Mail, it was surely not in its best interest that Morel should be antagonistic to the liquor traffic which all the principal supporters of the paper indulged in.¹ Gradually, he made the most convincing case against the arguments of the anti-liquor party.²

The official attitude progressively yielded to the importunate demands of the APS and its allies for increased duties on spirits, for restriction, and for the regulation of their quality and strength. Nevertheless in stopping short of prohibition it not only took into account the practical arguments of the Third Party which pointed to the economic, social and political exigencies of the West African situation. The APS was so much concerned with the liquor trade that at the Brussels Conference of 1889-90, which had been convened with the principal object of devising measures for the suppression of slavery and the slave trade in Africa, it took an active part in inducing it to extend its enquiries to the supply

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1. Morel to Holt, April, 1909, 18/6, JHP.
Morel reports to Holt his answer to Dr Harford-Batterby's efforts to make him support the United Committee.
 2. See Morel, E.D., Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee (Liquor Traffic in Southern Nigeria). (Pamphlet); Attack upon the Commission of Inquiry into the Spirit trade in Southern Nigeria (1910). This is a compilation of West African Mail articles on the role of the Anti-Liquor party after the Commission reported.

of alcoholic liquors and arms and ammunitions to Africans.¹
In 1895, the APS memorialised Chamberlain, urging an augmentation of the duty in a portion of the Gold Coast, in Lagos, and in the Niger Coast Protectorate.² In September 1896, in a reply to an anti-liquor memorial, the Marquis of Salisbury informed the committee of the APS that negotiations were "in progress for imposing on the British, French and German protectorates and Colonies in West Africa a uniform duty on spirits higher than the minimum provided by the Brussels Act."³

1. Fox Bourne, APS P. 53. Fox Bourne gave an address on "The Liquor Traffic with Native Races in Africa" at a meeting convened by the Holy Trinity Church of England Temperance Society at Barnsbury. See A.F. Dec. 1896.

2. Fox Bourne, APS, P. 54.

3. AF, Dec. 1896,
AF, May 1897.

The Colonial Office was so pestered by these anti-liquor campaigns¹ that Chamberlain in February 1897 asked the West African Governors to send home samples of the trade spirits imported into each Colony.² When these samples arrived, he requested the Board of Inland Revenue to analyse them in their laboratory in order to discover if the stuff sent to West Africa contained deleterious matter.³

1. From the time the United Committee was formed, Liquor Deputations were sent to the F.O. and C.O. The first deputation, led by the Duke of Westminster was received by Lord Salisbury on 14 Dec. 1888, and probably influenced the Liquor Clauses of the Brussels General Act, which again probably influenced the sale of spirits to natives in vast areas of Africa. A second deputation was received by Joseph Chamberlain, on 4 April 1899. Since this coincided with the Centenary week of the CMS "a most representative deputation filled the large reception room at the C.O. and listened to one of the strongest condemnations of the traffic which has ever been delivered". It is also claimed by the United Committee that following this deputation, the Brussels Conference agreed to a general raising of duties on important spirits. The third deputation was a private one, received by Chamberlain, who was accompanied by Lord Milner, in July 1901 and related to the Liquor Traffic in South Africa. The fourth was received by the Earl of Crewe, on 6 July 1908, the special object being to allow Bishop Tugwell and Asst. Bishops Oluwale and Johnson to express their views, which probably also influenced the Liquor Committee of Inquiry. A fifth deputation was to meet Lewis Harcourt on 11 July 1911. Vide London Record 30 June 1911; Alliance News 13 July 1911
2. Chamberlain to West African Governors 9 Feb. 1897 Circular CO 879/58 CP.
3. CO to Board of Inland Revenue, 3 April 1897, CO879/58 CP.

The principal medical officer to the laboratory, Dr T.E. Thorpe, found after elaborate analysis that the bulk of the gins were of an inferior quality though he could not pronounce on whether they were injurious. Dr Thorpe's report concluded as follows:

"While the great bulk of these samples, considered from a commercial and potable point of view, are of a distinctly inferior class, and have either been imperfectly rectified or have, in some instances, been prepared from crude or residual saccharine materials, naturally yielding a rather harsh spirit, none of the samples contain anything except small quantities of flavouring and colouring matters in addition to more or less of those by-products always present to some extent in commercial spirits.

"The presence of these by-products is important as indicative of the general character and mode of manufacture of the spirit, but their total quantity is small, and it is an open question to what extent the presence of a more than usual proportion of these by-products may injuriously affect consumers or add to the toxic effects when drunk in excess." 1

The surprising lack of positive action on the part of the Colonial Office on this disclosure shows its unwillingness to act unilaterally. Chamberlain believed that it was only an international conference that could satisfactorily regulate the trade.² But it was also a reflection of its support for the opinions expressed by the Colonial Officials on the traffic.

With the exception of Sir Ralph Moor, who was

1. Board of Inland Revenue to CO 12 July 1897, Dr Thorpe's Report, Encl. 33, CO 879/58 CP.

2. Chamberlain to United Committee 22 July 1898, CO 879/58 CP.

of the opinion that the spirit trade was crude, dangerous and ought to be prohibited¹, most of the Governors, for one reason or another, justified the trade. In his annual report for 1892, Sir Brandfort Griffith stated that the consumption of alcoholic drinks on the Gold Coast compared very favourably with that of the United Kingdom. Because drunkenness was uncommon on the Gold Coast, Griffith felt that the "West African native was not without a proper appreciation of the advantages of temperate habits."² The following year, Hesketh J. Bell, who was then Senior Assistant Treasurer to the Gold Coast Colony, told the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce that there was less drunkenness on the Gold Coast than there was in Great Britain, and that the sight of a man in a hopelessly intoxicated condition was very rare in the former place. He made an important anthropological point when he remarked that it would take two or three times as much alcohol to inebriate a negro than was necessary to put the white man into a similar condition. And in any case, since "to get really drunk would cost a native more than he could often afford (for to fuddle a black is an expensive operation)", it meant that only coastal chiefs and other men of means

1. MacCallum to Chamberlain, 6 Oct. 1897, Encl. in CO 879/58.

2. Gold Coast Annual Report 1892, rendered by Sir Brandford Griffith, K.C.I.G.

probably drank in excess. Bell was unable to perceive the terrible effects alleged being caused by the large importation of spirits on the habits, conditions or physique of the West Africans.¹ Sir Claude MacDonald, the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate justified the trade with economic considerations reinforced by his experience in the area. The liquor trade, he said, had formed a very considerable part of the import trade of the West Coast for over a century, and to suddenly put a stop to it would very seriously affect the entire conditions of trade, if it did not paralyse it altogether. In any case, he maintained that its prohibition would not assist the cause of temperance to any appreciable degree since the Africans manufactured a liquor from the palm tree which was potent enough under certain conditions of fermentation. Even with this, MacDonald said he had seen more drunkenness in one Fast-day in Glasgow than he had seen during his thirteen years' experience of Africa.²

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1. See 'Extract from Address by Mr Hesketh J. Bell, Senior Asst. Treasurer, Gold Coast Colony, to the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1 May 1893' in Miscellaneous Facts relating to the Extent of the Consumption of Spirits in the Colonies.... by the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber, 1895, Box 23/Pamphlet 5 . JHP.
 2. African Trade Section, Liverpool, Trade in Spirits with West Africa, 1896, Box 23 Pamphlet 7a JHP.

Since Sir Ralph Moor, who succeeded MacDonald, had condemned the trade, MacCallum of Lagos immediately wrote to Chamberlain defending the trade and mollifying the charges made by Moor. MacCallum had entertained Dr Hartford-Batterbee when he visited the West Coast for the United Committee, and had given him all assistance possible in connection with his enquiries into the evils of the drink trade in West Africa, but he felt unable to oppose the traffic. His opinion was re-inforced by several circumstances. According to MacCallum returns from officers of long residence in West Africa and from Supreme Courts were "a matter both of surprise and congratulation", for contrary to the assertion of many temperance enthusiasts, these reports showed a high standard of sobriety. He maintained that imported spirits were after constant dilution made so weak that by the time they reached the consumer they did little harm compared with the palm wine of the country. MacCallum then accused the missionary bodies of making constant assertions in the abstract that intemperance was prevalent but failing to follow it up by actively fighting the evil by forming temperance associations and guilds for the promotion of sobriety. For example, a great field for such an effort and organisation would be Abeokuta, which the Governor alleged, had the reputation of overindulgence in drink although it had had the advantage of prolonged missionary

effort. Other preventive measures were even inadmissible to him in so far as the foreign neighbours of Lagos adhered to a low duty on imported spirits (6½d per gallon as against 2s. per gallon in Lagos). Commenting on Moor's charges, MacCallum told Chamberlain that the present state of the law of the colony did not allow of the prohibition of import or sale of "raw spirits", and if it did it would only give an additional advantage to Porto Novo, since the liquor would be landed at Kotonou, smuggled into the Lagos Colony, and find their way in due course to Benin territory.¹

In West Africa, the missionary crusade against the trade was most significant in Nigeria where the trade was most predominant. It was led by Herbert Tugwell, an Anglican bishop of West Equatorial Africa, who is said to have been austere, gaunt and devoted but vociferous and theatrical.² With his religious co-adjutors, James Johnson and Oluwale, Tugwell's aim was to induce the local administration to cooperate with the Church in attaining the Christian ideal of "purity and righteousness".³ Yet in striving to show

1. MacCallum to Chamberlain, 6 Oct. 1897, CO 879/58.
MacCallum to Chamberlain, 13 Dec. 1897, CO 879/58.

2. For the agitation in Nigeria, in particular the role of Tugwell and other missionaries, vide E.A. Ayandele, The Political and Social Implications of Missionary Enterprise in the Evolution of Modern Nigeria, 1875-1914, (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, 1964) Pp. 302-315.

3. Vide London Record, 30 Oct. 1896.

his wards that the raison d'être of human society should be morality and honesty, he became emotional and wanted prudence; some of his tactics even degenerated into 'shocking vanity'¹. He led the anti-liquor agitation in Nigeria with such misplaced enthusiasm that even some of his colleagues doubted the wisdom of ~~some of~~ his utterances, which were at times so wild that they even undermined the credence that some of them deserved. He went into the interior making speeches to chiefs², and collecting signatures for petitions to the Government. He published profusely in the papers.³ He wanted increased duties on spirits but shifted his grounds to restriction and then ultimate prohibition.

Apart from his general support for the points which the British delegate urged at the Brussels Conference (i.e. increased duty), the new Governor of Lagos, Sir William MacGregor however believed that increased duty on

1. Kingsley to Lugard, 31 Dec. 1897. MSS Brit. Emp.S.71.L.P.

2. Holt to Morel, 15 Dec. 1899, F8/1, EDMP.
Morel to Holt, 1 April 1909, 18/6, JHP.

3. e.g. in the Times of 14 Nov. 1908.

spirits was futile to prevent drunkenness.¹ Quoting from his own experience, he declared:

"A duty of 10s. a gallon on spirits does not prevent people from getting drunk in Glasgow on any Saturday; a duty of 14s. a gallon in British New Guinea does not in any way tend to make the drinking part of the community to any appreciable extent more temperate....." 2.

MacGregor felt that, though not a practical proposition, prohibition would be most effective in checking drunkenness. But he pointed out that this step would unwittingly ruin the trade in imported spirits without in any way making the people more sober. It would mean the promotion of the palm wine industry, which, according to Dr Albert Chalmers, Assistant Colonial Surgeon on the Gold Coast, possessed about the same intoxicating properties as beer, and caused as much inebriation, under certain conditions, as the more expensive gin or rum.³

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1. He suggests 3 methods of dealing with concentrated alcohol. This involved loading the duty in arithmetical progression for each degree above proof to such an extent as to make the importation on a large scale of highly concentrated alcohol unprofitable, confiscating all overproof alcohol not to be used in the arts or sciences, and compelling all over-proof alcohol to pass through the Queen's warehouse or through a licensed boarded warehouse. Mrs Suzanne Miers is working on the Brussels Conferences dealing with the liquor and the Slave trade; the international aspect of these agitations is therefore deliberately omitted here.
 2. MacGregor to Chamberlain 15 Sept. 1899, CO 879/58 CP.
 3. in Hodgson to Chamberlain, 16 Oct. 1899, Encl. CO 879/58 CP. In Morning Post, 18 Dec. 1901, MacGregor is reported to have scornfully referred to the vigorous campaigns by the missionaries against what he calls "the liquor will-o'-the-wisp."

When the anti-liquor party saw that increased duties on spirits did not produce the desired end, they fell on restriction. In July 1901, the Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee told Chamberlain that if liquor was allowed to be carried by railway in West Africa without strict limitations, it would increase the difficulty of protecting hinterland african races from the liquor traffic.¹ Much as this point might be valid theoretically, it was not enough to force the local administration to ruin the railway by denying it of its goods. Although he was himself a total abstainer, MacGregor could not see his way to destroy the ordinary course of trade carried on in Lagos. Moreover, he defended the carriage of liquor by rail because it would practically make no difference to the trade in spirits whether liquor was carried by rail or on men's heads. The transport charges, which he quoted, would explain the futility of not using the railway to carry spirits. The cost of carrying spirits by rail from Lagos to Aro was 15 shillings a ton. But Aro is 3 miles from Abeokuta. And since the cost from Lagos to Abeokuta otherwise than by rail was 16s. 1d., the charge was practically the same either way. Moreover, the cost of carriage of spirits

1. United Committee to CO. 15 July 1901, CO 879/100. They also urged increased duty in view of the alleged increase in wages in West Africa.

from Lagos to Ibadan by rail was 47 shillings a ton as compared to 40s. 4½d. by canoes and carriers. MacGregor declared that he saw no reason to change these charges:

"It would be senseless folly to build a railway at enormous expense and to force goods of any kind the importation of which is allowed into the Colony to be carried alongside of it on men's heads when we know perfectly well that the goods will, in any case, be taken to their destination...." 1.

The practical considerations of the local administration, which had in 1905 also regulated the quality and strength of the liquor sent into Nigeria², commended itself neither to the missionary party in Lagos nor Exeter Hall in Britain. In August of the same year, the United Committee, in a memorial to Lyttleton, the Colonial Secretary, wondered why Government railways constructed with public funds should be used for carrying "dangerous" liquor into the interior. Advocating a

1. MacGregor to Chamberlain, 21 Sept. 1901, CO 879/100 CP.

2. In 1905 the Lagos Govt. regulated the quality and strength of liquor, the tariff rising to 4s. a gallon in 1905 and 5s. in 1908. So as to reduce the consumption of potent liquors, a sliding scale of duty was imposed. For every degree or part of degree over 50% Trailles there was an extra charge of 2½d. and a rebate of 1½d. for every degree under strength, subject to a minimum of 3s. 6d. in 1905 and 4s. in 1908. Thus the liquor imported gradually declined in strength until 90% of the imports were about 28 degrees under proof. C.P. Lucas: A Historical Geography of British Colonies, Vol. III (Oxford, 1913), pp. 210-213, Also Ayandele, P. 315.

suitable system of licensing in all the West African territories, (especially as liquor was used as an article of barter and currency), it suggested a uniform duty of five shillings a gallon of strength $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ underproof.¹ These opinions reverberated in Parliament. The liquor question which the Archbishop of Canterbury had raised in the Lords on 6 June, 1905; Samuel Smith and Sir Mark Stewart also in the Commons, was continued in August 1907 by Charles Roberts who wanted the rate of carriage by railway to Abeokuta and Ibadan increased. Winston Churchill, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, told the Commons that the policy of the Government was to keep the rates as high as possible without driving the trade to other carriers. He pointed out that between Lagos and Abeokuta the railway was in acute competition with the canoe transport on the River Ogun, which ran from Abeokuta to the Lagos Lagoon. A larger increase in the railway rates than was reasonable would merely divert the carriage to the river, thus economically depriving the railway of its revenue without preventing the liquor from reaching its destination. Moreover, since all spirits brought into Abeokuta and Ibadan was subject to a local tax of 9d. and 1s. a gallon respectively, payable in addition to duties

1. United Committee to CO. 11 Aug. 1905, Memorial Encl.No 4. CO 879/100.

See Also APS to CO 14 Oct. 1898, CO 87A/58.

paid on importation, Churchill was of the opinion that the price of spirits in the interior was correspondingly high. In any case Cathcart Mason, who was on the side of the Third Party, at the same time pointed out that the rivers already carried spirits at cheaper rates than the railway.¹ Yet Exeter Hall was unconvinced. It believed that the railway had led to the increase of liquor in the interior and even alleged that the tonnage of spirits carried over the railway exceeded that of other branches of trade carried by the same means. Although these charges were proved to be false,² the Anti-Liquor members of Parliament rather than relent, forced the Colonial Office to continue to seek reports on the subject.

In September 1907, Sir Walter Egerton in reply to the Colonial Office request for his opinion on appropriate methods for dealing with the traffic, ruled out prohibitive laws as hardly practicable. His remedy, which took cognisance of the inability of trying to enforce unenforcable laws, was an increase of duty, extension of the Lagos Spirit Licence Ordinance of 1893 to large interior towns, and the effective implementation of the South Nigeria

1. See Hansard, No. 7. Vol. CXVII, 1905, 826.
Also CO 879/100.

2. Ag. Gov. J.J. Thornburn to C.O. 21 Sept. 1905 and Encl.
No. 5 Report of Birtwistle, Commercial Intelligence
Officer, CO 879/100.

Proclamation (No. 2 of 1901) within the towns of Calabar and Warri and other places. The limitations of these remedies were recognised by Egerton, but the impracticability of imposing the license system indiscriminately pointed to the inadequacies of the Colonial machinery. As he told the Colonial Office:

"It does not seem to be understood in England that we are not in a position to fully administer the country. As much of the details of Government as possible are left in the hands of the Chiefs of the different districts. The police force is very small, and only attempts to control serious crime. A large portion of the country is dense forest. The whole of it is unroaded.....It is undesirable to introduce any regulations which cannot be enforced....." 1

At the same time, he opposed the Humanitarian proposal for "buffer zones" to be extended (i.e. from Northern Nigeria), if a strip of Southern Nigeria was made a "buffer zone" to prevent the introduction of liquor into Northern Nigeria, this^{will}/not only enlarge the area of prohibition, but also shift the responsibility for its enforcement on the Southern Nigerian Administration. It would in turn, Egerton contended, mean that another "buffer zone" would be required to protect this strip. Like other Governors, Egerton would not conclude without considering alternative means of revenue. If a large part of Colonial revenue was obtained from duties on spirits,

1. Egerton to CO, 29 Sept. 1907, CO 879/100.

it meant that before taking any steps that might stop that revenue, other expedients easily workable without hardship to the people, should be considered. Egerton felt it was very difficult to find such a source of revenue without recourse to the contentious novelty - direct taxation.¹ The Colonial Office was influenced by these weighty arguments.²

But the Anti-Liquor Party were now bent on total prohibition. In a speech made at the Pan-Anglican Congress on 18 June 1908, Bishop Tugwell condemned the liquor traffic in West Africa as "commercially unsound, socially destructive and morally indefensible." He referred to the 1907 Annual Report of Southern Nigeria to show that liquor importation was destroying other legitimate commerce. Out of the revenue of £1,088,717 for 1907, £600,000 was raised on spirits alone, whereas only £75,000 came from importation of cotton goods. Moreover, the increase of imported spirits compared with 1905 was £96,759, whilst cotton revenue had decreased by £7,833. There seemed also to have been a decrease in importation of hardware, provision and other useful articles amounting to £17,000. He argued that if this process continued, legitimate trade would be destroyed

1. Ibid.

2. Crewe to Gov. of Southern Nigeria, 22 April 1908, CO 879/100.

and Lancashire ruined. Secondly, he surveyed the demoralising and destructive effect of the trade on society. In earlier days in West Africa when one man visited another, Tugwell said, the symbol of friendship and hospitality was the Kola nut; "today it is the gin bottle", and the "evil" was spreading into the interior. Morally, he contended that if Britain did not allow Hamburg spirits to enter her own ports but allowed millions of gallons of these into West African ports without an effective licensing system, then Britain was untrue to her imperial trust and merited the Frenchman's gibe that "the English are a nation of hypocrites".¹

The fire from Tugwell's speeches and articles in the Times glowed in Parliament; and hastened the formal submission by the United Committee of its case for prohibition. Against the arguments which the Committee put forward, Walter Egerton reiterated his earlier opinions. He pointed out that although the liquor traffic was an evil, considerable benefits accrued from it "in spreading by settled government and the maintenance of British law and order throughout our possession". Apart from the powerful argument on revenue,

1. 'Speech by Bishop Tugwell at the Pan-Anglican Congress, June 18, 1908' entitled 'The Liquor Traffic in West Africa' in CO 879/100.

Sir John Kennaway continued Q's in the Commons.

2. United Committee to CO 6 July 1908 CO 879/100 CP.

Egerton pointed out that some members of the Pan-Anglican Conference had admitted that prohibition was bound to fail; the Bishop of Kensington at instance was reported to have said that "prohibition has failed in this country, and he did not think it would ever succeed". Egerton, therefore, advised the Colonial Office against "the futility of the attempt to make people moral by legislation....."¹

After examining the various information it had received on the subject, the Colonial Office concluded that although there was divergence of opinion among qualified judges on the matter, the widespread demoralisation which was alleged, had been disputed by many persons of great West African experience and high responsibility. It wrote to the United Committee:

".....These authorities maintain that the statistics show that the consumption of imported liquor in West Africa is relatively small, that drunkenness is exceptional among the natives, and that the spirits imported, though objectionable to the European palate by reason of their crudity, are free from noxious ingredients....." 2.

As a necessary preliminary to any measure which might be adopted, the Colonial Office gave the hint of the necessity for an investigation. Persistent questions in Parliament,

1. Egerton to CO 6 July 1908, CO 879/100.

2. CO to United Committee, 18 July 1908 CO 879/100.

and a favourable reaction from the Anti-Liquor Party to this necessity, led the Colonial Office to institute a Commission of Enquiry the result of which practically repudiated the arguments advanced by the Anti-Liquor Party as wholly unsubstantiated by the facts of the West African situation.¹

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1. In 1909 Lord Crewe appointed a Commission to enquire into the allegations made by the Anti-Liquor Party that African natives were deteriorating as a result of the vile 'fire-water' sold to them by gin traders. Sir MacKenzie Chalmers, a public servant of distinction, was Chairman. He had had previous extensive and peculiar experience in the taking and sifting of evidence. The Commissioners, who were unpaid for their services, rendered a unanimous report in Oct. 1909 that the allegations of the missionary party were unsubstantiated and particularly that the trade spirit imported was not of deleterious quality. The report was published in October 1909 as (Cd. 4906) : Report of Committee of Inquiry into the Liquor Trade in Southern Nigeria Part I and Cd. 4907: Part II: Minutes of Evidence. The Commission visited the principal centres in the Protectorate and examined orally 88 Europeans and 83 Africans, including 31 witnesses put forward by the various missionary societies. The answers of 64 district, police and medical officers, who could not attend the Commission's sittings, to a series of questions circulated by the Commission, were also obtained. 175 samples of spirits imported were analysed by Sir Edward Thorpe, F.R.S., then Principal of the British Govt. Laboratory, the analyses showing that there was nothing to complain of as regards quality of the imported spirits. Major Bedford, Director of the Central Excise Laboratory for India, examined by the Commission on its return, was of the opinion that, assuming the accuracy of the analysis, these imported spirits contained nothing of a physiologically injurious character. See the Times, 7 July 1911.

Exeter Hall was utterly disgraced¹ after the report of the Liquor Commission was published, though it continued to fight a rearguard action.² The Missionary party, probably smarting under the danger

1. Even before the report was published the sorry figure cut by the missionaries when presenting their unimpressive evidence was already known in Britain. On 28 June 1909, Holt triumphantly wrote to Morel, "I hear Tugwell and all his set have failed to substantiate anything before the Liquor Commission", and then humourously added, "A tale is told of a dinner at Govt. House at which 'Welsh Cream' was served as a liqueur - the 'Welsh Cream' being relished by the company, although made out of trade gin bought for the occasion in Lagos." And when the report was published, to the discomfort of missionary dignitaries who had misled themselves so stubbornly, Holt wrote to Morel with cynical cheer: "....For the Bishops, they are getting it hot....You will be hearing from them in due course. I wonder what the Duke of Westminster will have to say to his sources of information. They have made a fool of him and I would give much to hear what he has to say about the report....." Holt to Morel, 14 Nov. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.
2. Although no complaint or protest was officially proffered by the N.R. and L.T.U.C. to the C.O., they continued to criticise the report. An International Federation for the Protection of Native Races from Alcohol formed in 1887 at Zurich now collaborated more with N.R. and L.T.U.C. Several Policies of World Federation were discussed. Times 20 Aug. 1911. But the collapse of the African Liquor Traffic Conference held in Brussels on 4 Jan. 1912 added to the embarrassment of the United Committee. Times 5 Jan. 1912, Times 6 Feb. 1912; Yorkshire Post 7 Feb. 1912; African Mail, 19 Feb. 1912. Yet the United Committee continued to raise the matter in Parliament.

of decline which threatened it,¹ had tried to justify its existence by hammering on an issue which it knew had always shaken the ethical foundations of English Society. But statesmanship demanded that the social and commercial implications of the liquor traffic in West Africa should be judged not by the emotional and psychological processes of traditional conscience, but in the background of West African exigency.² For the Aborigines' Protection Society to insist on the abolition of the liquor traffic even when it was not practical politics in West Africa not only demonstrates its forlorn tenacity to early ideals, but also shows to what extent it could be misled by its missionary allies.

It was this reluctance to depart from traditional ideals which led the APS always to re-state its perennial views on the issues of the time. At the International Congress on Colonial Sociology held in Paris in 1900,

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1. At the Brussels Conference, the German delegate, Dr Gohring, while denying the allegations made about the quality of trade spirits, said that the accounts of the horrors alleged due to the liquor traffic in Africa came generally from British missionaries. He pointed out that "they were disappointed at the small number of converts they made, and sought to throw the blame on the liquor traffic." See the Report of the Proceedings of the Commission of the Conference on the African Liquor Trade at Brussels, Encl. in No. 146, F.O. to C.O. 2 May 1899. CO 879/58.
 2. African Mail, 19 Feb. 1912, See also E.D. Morel, An Attack on the Commission of Inquiry into the Liquor Traffic in Southern Nigeria. op. cit.

Fox Bourne lucidly expounded the contemporary attitude of the APS to Colonial questions. Of primary importance to the aborigines was "a right to the land of which they are the prior occupants and to its use in ways approved by them, or at any rate to so much thereof as may be requisite for their sustenance and prosperity under conditions not less favourable to them than those which they enjoyed when they were its sole owners."¹ This explains the stand of the APS during the crisis of the Gold Coast Land Ordinance of March 1897 which, it said, ought "to have been modified in the interest of the Natives!"² Its protest against a proposed Forestry Ordinance introduced in September 1901 in the Lagos Legislative Council also owes something to this principle, apart from its alleged breach of treaty obligations with African chiefs.³

Secondly, the APS believed in the right of Africans "to the maintenance of the social, religious, political, and other institutions they have established among themselves, subject only to such changes as they may voluntarily agree

1. H.R. Fox Bourne, The Claims of Uncivilized Races: A Paper submitted to the International Congress on Colonial Sociology, held in Paris in August 1900 (Endorsed by the APS London) P. 6.

2. A.F. July 1897. See Chap. V.

3. Annual Report for 1901, also A.F. April 1901. Also Chap. VI.

to under the guidance of the more civilised visitors and residents whom they have intelligently admitted to partnership or supremacy in the occupation or use of their country."¹ This belief was behind the APS memorial to Chamberlain on 28 March 1896 against a "rigid avoidance of meddling with native institutions, even if they are objectionable in themselves, unless and until they can be replaced by or gradually developed into something manifestly better".² This idea explains not only its protest against punitive raids but also its action in October 1901 against the Lagos Native Councils' Bill which the Society saw as capable of undermining local institutions of government which were essential to African prosperity.³

It stressed the right of Africans "to participation, on equitable terms, in all the beneficial arrangements introduced into their country." This principle underlay the APS support for African participation in the Civil Service, in municipal governments and representation in Legislative Councils, which was

1. Fox Bourne, The Claims of Uncivilized Races, P.6.

2. A.F. Dec. 1896.

3. Annual Report for 1901; A.F. April 1901.
For the details of the Bill see S.M. Tamuno: British Administrative Control of Southern Nigeria: A Study in the Administrations of Sir Ralph Moor, William MacGregor and Sir Walter Egerton, 1900-1912, (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, 1962).

hoped would guarantee that "judicious contact" and "just and wise control" which the Society always insisted on.¹ But this support was made ineffective by two other attitudes. The APS was not composed of "Little Englanders" but of Imperialists. The anti-Imperial attitude implicit in Fox Bourne's demand for Egyptian self-government is more apparent than real. It was a temporary deviation from the imperial philosophy of the APS, but one in conformity with the Liberal tradition which had in 1877 opposed British presence in Egypt but found itself occupying it in 1881.² As will be seen in the next chapter, new influences were to modify the attitude of the Society to Colonial rule. Its imperialism is seen in its ultimate insistence that such a programme as the demand for self-government by the Colonies did not come within its aims; a position which found it not always supporting other political agitations not necessarily or immediately directed to this, and inevitably disaffected many educated Africans who might have helped it in its need for accurate intelligence. Moreover, the unfavourable disposition shown towards this class of educated Africans greatly undermined the ideal of harmonious relationship.

1. Fox Bourne, The Claims of Uncivilized Races, p.6.

2. For a discussion of this historical irony, see John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone Vol. III (1880-1898) (London, 1903) Pp. 72-85.

For the Aborigines' Friend to maintain that "there is too much imitation of English manners and customs amongst them, too much desire, by showy dressing and stylish deportment, to adopt what may be only the veneer of civilization, not the thing itself,"¹ was as unfortunate as Kingsley's gibe on those she called the "curse of the Coast", who "cheat the black and mislead the white".² It indicates a psychological attitude to cultural contacts which would claim that the Romans were probably more envious than gratified because the people of England acquired some of their culture.

However, in contrast with this particular negative attitude, the APS was principally and energetically concerned with calling popular and official attention to other errors in policy, administrative abuses, and instances of wrong-doing by irresponsible adventurers in West Africa.³ But since the organisation of the Society centred mainly on the ability of its Secretary; and as so much of its work was done by means of memorials and personal communications with the official authorities⁴, it meant that the personal qualities and accurate information of

1. A.F. Dec. 1896.

2. Mary Kingsley, West African Studies, passim.

3. See Chaps. IV and VI

4. Fox Bourne, APS, P.2.

its functionaries counted far more than in a mass movement. At times, however, enthusiasm outran knowledge, and credibility was given to every colonial information however hare-brained. The practice of not releasing the names of the Society's correspondents (in spite of repeated demands by the Colonial Office) must have convinced that office that much of the evidence was fabricated.¹ As ever, lack of adequate funds² meant that the Society ought to have concentrated within its means. But it was lack of accurate intelligence, more than anything, which greatly militated against the work of the Society. As its President, A.E. Pease³, told Governor MacGregor in 1902, "we, as a Society, find

1. Minute on 21 Sept. by R.L. Antrobus on H.R. Fox Bourne to CO 19 Sept. 1906, CO 520/40.
When the CO insisted on this occasion, however, according to Antrobus, "Fox Bourne called here and gave me confidentially the name of his correspondent." Minute of 4 Oct. by Antrobus on the same letter.
2. The Annual Reports and the Account books of the Society always complained of adverse balances, e.g. in 1907, while the Society's expenditure amounted to £574 : 10 : 4d an adverse balance of £108 : 10 : 8d. was left 'to be carried forward to the account of 1908.'
(MSS Brit. Emp. S.20, E4/6.)
3. Pease, Arthur, E., J.P., M.P. (Liberal Unionist) Darlington from 1895; born at Darlington 12 Sept. 1837, 4th son of Joseph Pease of Darlington. Educated privately. Was Liberal M.P. for Whitby earlier, 1880-95. Member of the Royal Commission on Opium, 1893. Died 27 Aug. 1898.

ourselves often handicapped for want of local knowledge".¹
 MacGregor himself acknowledged that it must indeed have been an extremely difficult thing for the APS "to keep the threads of complicated native problems in its hands".²

This handicap must have placed the Society at a disadvantage when its views came to be considered by officials and other humanitarians³ in the period. The Society seems to have been much more regarded in official circles, during the two decades before the period covered by this study. In 1875, when he was Secretary of State for India, the Marquis of Salisbury had publicly acknowledged that "in all matters where conflicting interests have to be reconciled, the operations of a Society like the APS must prove beneficial by disseminating sound principles and strengthening the hands of the authorities who have to deal with people in distant parts whose interests come sharply into conflict."⁴ In contrast, Ripon in 1894 did "not attach much importance to their opinions -

1. A.F. July 1902. Pease and Fox Bourne had an interview with William MacGregor (during his leave) and discussed the Forest and Native Councils Ordinances that were being criticised by the APS and opposed in Lagos.
2. A.F. July 1902.
3. As was shown in Chap. I, Morel and Holt thought very little of the APS and less of the ASS. As already pointed out also Mary Kingsley had disseminated the idea that John Holt alone was worth more than ten APS men.
4. Quoted in Fox Bourne, the APS, P.2.

knowing how they are manufactured." ¹ During this time, the strong hostility which Hemming displayed ² later contributed to the Colonial Office view that the APS information was hardly 'reliable' ³; and led that Office always to insist on having the names of their informants. Although the Colonial Office at the same time was of the opinion that Morel was also "apt to make rather wild assertions", ⁴ it seems certain that as pressure-groups, the Third Party counted far more than the APS in official policy on West Africa during the Imperial era.

But one outstanding quality of the APS was its efforts always to justify itself when the belief was current that humanitarianism was in decline. ⁵ In May 1897, Sir Charles Dilke asked the APS to "justify itself - for

1. Ripon, Cabinet Memo, the Swazi Crisis, 21 May 1894, CO African (South) 466, 3-4; Ripon to Roseberry, 4 Sept. 1894. Q in Wolf, The Marquess of Ripon, also vide Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, (London, 1961) P. 444.
2. In 1892, Hemming had minuted that "Mr Fox Bourne ought to be ashamed of inviting complaints and accusations against the Colonial authorities from ignorant and mendacious people like the natives of West Africa." Minute of 7 Feb. 1892 by Hemming, CO 196/219.
3. Minute of 20 Sept. 1906 by S. Olivier on Fox Bourne to C.O. 19 Sept. 1906, CO 520/40.
4. Minute of 21 Sept. 1906 on W.A.M. 21 Sept. 1906, CO 520/40.
5. See Sir Charles Dilke, Sixty Years of Empire, (1897) Pp. 97-8, and of G.P. Gooch in The Heart of Empire (1901) P. 328. Also A.F. Madden, 'Changing Attitudes', op. cit.

at no time had its principles been more directly challenged by the leading classes in large parts of the world than very lately. He observed that "in former days the doctrines of the Society had been far more generally recognised than they were at the moment, and it was time that a stand should be made for the principles which had been so widely laid down.....by the grandfathers of the present generation of the Society."¹ Although G.P. Gooch was to consider this view too pessimistic², the new President, Sir W. Brampton Gurdon³, at a meeting held at Caxton Hall on 21 March 1906, referred to "the decline, the deterioration the debasement of public sentiment in relation to slavery" and allied questions.⁴ At the annual meeting of 1907, Dilke declared: "this is the centenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade, and we all of us cannot but feel, as we have in a melancholy fashion declared at our two last

1. A.F. May 1897.

2. Annual Report, A.F. 1906.

3. Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton, Liberal M.P. for Norfolk since 1889. J.P. & C.C. for Suffolk; Lord-Lt. Suffolk, 1907; Born 5 Sept. 1840, youngest son of Brampton Gurdon M.P., Letton, Norfolk and Henrietta, daughter of 1st Lord Colborne; educated Eton & Trinity, Cambridge. Appointed Clerk in Treasury in 1863 by competition; private secretary to Gladstone as Chancellor of Exchequer 1865-6, and as P.M. 1868-74, served on special missions to S. Africa, 1879, 1881; Chairman of Committee of Selection, House of Commons, 1906. Owned about 3000 acres. Died 31 May 1911.

4. A.F. April 1906.

annual meetings, that we have rather gone backwards than forwards in the last two or three years - that we have retrograded than progressed, as we were doing almost uninterruptedly until, ten or twenty years ago."¹ In spite of the activity of its secretary and the frequent pronouncements^{of}/ideals, members at annual meetings always lamented that the APS had retrogressed in the ideas which were before accepted and practised.² This state of affairs was all the more irksome when it was at the same time recognised that "the range of work devolving upon it is now far greater than it was when the Society was founded in 1837."³

This immense task might have been shared by the Anti-Slavery Society, but it had also become obvious that the ASS itself was almost a spent force. Roseberry might flatter an Anti-Slavery delegation of 1892 by referring to "that continuity of moral policy which Great Britain could not afford to disregard."⁴ In contrast, Sir William Harcourt warned him against "these philanthropic -

1. Report of Annual Meeting in A.F. May 1907.

2. Ibid.

3. A.F. May 1908.

4. Marquess of Crewe, Lord Roseberry, Vol. II (London, 1931), P. 405. Roseberry to ASS delegation comprising many leading M.P.s, on 20 Oct. 1892 attended at the FO with the special object of pressing the construction of a railway from Mombassa to the Victoria Nyanza.

missionary - civilizing pretenders" since he was of the opinion that much of these humanitarian pressures were a sham facade masking the commercial and political interests of their economic supporters and other jingoistic officials.¹ Although it had procured one or two Brussels Conferences, and, as will be seen, seized on a slavery issue in Nigeria, an outstanding feature of the Anti-Slavery Society was its failure to command official attention as of old.

Apart from the general decline in humanitarianism of which this official indifference was symptomatic, the records of the ASS until 1909 show that it suffered from its own peculiar weaknesses which contributed to its ineffectiveness. In 1897, the President of the Society lamented its decline. The old age of its Secretary, Charles Allen², the failure in health and eventual death of Eastoe Teall³, his very active Assistant, exhaustion

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1. A.G. Gardiner, The Life of Sir William Harcourt, Vol.II (London, 1923), pp. 194-5.
Harcourt was opposed to the Uganda adventure and the railway and thought that these pressures merely masked the commercial interests of Sir Wm. MacKinnon and The Imperial British East Africa Company and other officials Lugard, who had "worked up" an agitation on Uganda along these lines.
 2. Minutes, ASS Committee, 30 July 1897, MSS Brit. Emp. S.20 E2/11 Vol. VI.
 3. Minutes, ASS Committee, 30 July 1897 (ibid).
Eastoe Teall died on 9 Nov. 1897, vide Minutes of ASS Committee, 3 Dec. 1897. MSS Brit. Emp. S.20 E2/11, Vol. VI.

of funds, cessation of slavery and the slave trade strictly in the old form, left the President worried as to the future of the Society.¹ He asked the ASS Committee to discuss this crucial point for it "seems to me that the first consideration is the work to which such a society can devote itself in the future."² In the Committee meeting of November 1901, the Secretary stated that "the work of the office had for many months past been so light as not nearly to occupy the six days' attendance required".³ His suggestion "that he should regularly attend on fixed days in the week only, unless increase of business demanded further attendance" was approved by the Committee.⁴ In fact, the fortunes of the ASS were so low that discussions were held on winding it up.⁵ But the courage to take this epoch-making decision was lacking, and, in any case, sympathisers were still many whose immediate show of enthusiasm succeeded in carrying the

1. Minutes of ASS Committee, 3 Dec. 1897 (ibid).

2. Ibid.

3. Minutes, ASS Committee, Nov. 1901, MSS Brit Emp. S.20, E2/12, Vol. VII.

4. Minutes, ASS Committee, 6 Dec. 1901 (ibid).

5. Minutes of ASS Committee, 30 July 1897 MSS Brit. Emp. S.20, E2/11, Vol. VI.

Society on.¹

It was this respective weakness of the two Societies, more than anything, which led to the amalgamation of 1909. After the death of F.W. Chesson in 1888, the Executive Committee of the APS had considered it "expedient to unite the APS with the ASS."² Negotiations proceeded along these lines, but ultimately the ASS "concluded that it is inexpedient to add to their duties the important work of the APS."³ Hence Fox Bourne was appointed the APS Secretary; yet it never escaped from the mind of the APS Committee that, as the two societies had much in common, it would be greatly to their advantage if they could at length join forces. On the

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1. For example, a letter from Birmingham, signed by Arthur Albright, William White J.P., Cephas Butler, Joel Cadbury, Samuel Price and John Henry Lloyd, greatly regretted "to hear the critical condition in which the Society is placed by the dangerous illness of the Under-Secretary, Estoe Teall, and other difficulties, so that the lapse of the Society has been spoken of." Although these enthusiasts were themselves prevented from attending by their own "illness, infirmity and other causes", they "greatly deplored the cessation of this Society". As townsmen of Joseph Sturge, a founder and upholder of the principles of the ASS, their romantic attachment to the past of the Society is understandable.
See Minutes of ASS Committee, 30 July 1897, E2/11, Vol. VI
 2. A.F. May 1909.
 3. Ibid.

ASS side, many members had found the independent existence of the ASS unjustifiable.¹

Therefore, although officially both societies were apt to emphasize their individual identities and importance, there was much overlapping of function and membership.² As years went on, it became increasingly felt that "one strong society representing the cause of the native races of mankind could more effectively serve their interests than two separate organizations working independently, and often handicapped by want of adequate

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1. A letter of July 1897 from Dr Cust and Richard Shore questioned whether it was necessary any longer to keep up a special Agency to stamp out the dying embers of slavery. It asked if it would not be possible to effect an amalgamation with the APS. Minutes, ASS Committee, 30 July, 1897, E2/11, Vol. VI. op. cit.
 2. For example, (Sir) T.F. Buxton who was President of the ASS from 1899 was a Vice-President of the APS in 1900, while J.A. Pease, President of APS was a Vice-President of the ASS. Also others, like W.A. Albright and Henry Gurney, to name a few, were on both committees.

resources.¹ Several circumstances within the years, therefore, combined to make amalgamation almost inevitable. The internal weakness of both meant that combination was necessary for strength. Their traditional affinity, marked by overlapping membership, was progressively tightened by periodic deaths on both sides.² The nature of their

1. A.F. May 1909.

Although the ASS often received legacies and donations which it invested, subscriptions always fell off; thus the Society's normal administration was always in adverse financial circumstances. For instance, according to the Minutes of 6 Dec. 1901, legacies were received to the tune of £753 : 2 : 6d. from a certain T. Graham Young, and invested in £2000 New Zealand Stock. In 1908, a legacy of £300 came from a certain Miss M.A. Hewitson of Leeds, and was invested in the purchase of £346 : 15 : 11d. Victoria 3% Stock at 89 $\frac{1}{4}$. But the Minutes of 6 Nov. of the same year had complained that "subscriptions had fallen due to deaths and other causes", and no fresh subscribers came forward. Two years previously, the 1906 Annual Report had complained that "amounts raised by contributions is not always adequate to meet the ordinary expenditure of the Society". The report had also asked "friends to make up for the losses suffered each year by the deaths of subscribers, and to endeavour to interest others in a work for which the need certainly does not grow less." This weak financial situation of both Societies compares with the rickety position of the West African Mail. For the ASS accounts see MSS Brit. Emp. S.20, E4/3, E4/4.

2. A very regular feature in both the Aborigines' Record and the Anti-Slavery Reporter is the frequent report of deaths. Most members were born around 1840 and had shared in the keen enthusiasm of traditional conscience. Towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, they were growing old, some very old, and deaths by natural causes were very regular. The ineffectiveness of both Societies became almost as assured as new enrolments fell off during the period covered by this study. After the jingo spirit had played its full course, and was somewhat in decline, there was again a corresponding re-dedication to imperial responsibility.

present problem (there was little difference between slavery and its new forms),¹ inadequate funds, and the immensity of their task in the face of an apparent decline in humanitarian conscience, forced earnest men to advocate amalgamation. Moreover, the Third Party had become a great influence in West African policy, and a challenge to the older humanitarian bodies. This meant that the traditional Exeter Hall really had to justify itself.

The wish for amalgamation which had hung fire since the close of the 19th century became a burning issue in 1908. Negotiations were begun, but amalgamation was always deferred by personal equations on both sides. In particular, on the APS side, Fox Bourne had so reorganised and represented it that the Society recovered its lost force and escaped a threatened dissolution. The evidence suggests that the move within the APS to unite with the ASS was killed by his personality, and the ASS knowing that the man would accept no post other than Secretary of the amalgamated Society preferred to postpone the inevitable.

1. See Chap. IV.

On 3 January 1908, Sir T. ^Fowell Buxton¹ told the Anti-Slavery Committee that "he had always been in favour of an ultimate union of the two societies, which he thought would be for the benefit of those whom they were meant to serve, but he was not sure whether the time had yet come for this."² At that meeting, Henry Gurney³ told the Committee that a sub-committee had been constituted

1. Buxton, Sir Thomas Fowell, 3rd. Bt. (1837-1915. Born 26 Jan. 1837, eldest son of Sir Edward North Buxton, 2nd Bt., by his wife, Catherine, 2nd daughter of Samuel Gurney of Upton, Essex. His grandfather, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, author of The African Slave Trade and Remedy, was the friend of Sir James MacKintosh, William Wilberforce, and Zachary Macaulay and succeeded Wilberforce as the leader of the anti-slavery movement.

Educated at Harrow and Trinity, Cambridge; succeeded his father in 1858 as 3rd Bt. In 1865, was returned to Parliament in the Liberal interest as one of the members for King's Lynn, and he represented that constituency until 1868. His subsequent attempts to enter Parliament in 1874 (Westminster), 1876, 1879 (North Norfolk), 1880, (West Essex) were unsuccessful.

Had a multitude of social interests: elected President of the Br. & Foreign Ass. in 1899; interested in the volunteer movement, the welfare of African Natives, better elementary schools, the CMS, Missions to Seamen, and the Commons Preservation Society. In 1895, was appointed Governor of S. Australia. Retired as Gov. on completion of his tenure in 1898; created G.C.M.G. in 1899 in recognition of his services. Became President of AS & APS in 1909. Died at Cromer, 28 Oct. 1915.

2. Minutes, ASS Committee, 3 Jan. 1908, MSS Brit. Emp. S.20, E2/12, Vol. VII.
3. The Gurneys, like the Buxtons were traditionally associated with Exeter Hall.

by the APS to consider the question, and the ASS Secretary, Travers Buxton, spoke of "interviews which he had held with Mr F.W. Fox and Mr J.H. Harris,"¹ on the issue. A resolution was thus carried on the motion of J.G. Alexander, seconded by Dr Felkin, "that a sub-committee of the ASS be appointed to consider the policy of amalgamation, to confer if necessary with the sub-committee of the APS, and report."²

On 7 February 1908, the sub-committee reported to the ASS Committee that they had met on the 22 January and recommended "that a working union between the two Societies be aimed at, care being taken that the identity of each Society be not lost."³ Moreover, a letter from Fox Bourne and F.W. Fox informed the ASS that a similar sub-committee of the APS had reported to their Committee where it had been resolved "that the sub-committee be empowered to enter into negotiations with British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society with a view for amalgamation, on the understanding that Mr Fox Bourne be Secretary or Joint-Secretary, and that the title of the APS be preserved."⁴

1. Minutes, ASS Committee, 3 Jan. 1908, E2/12, VOL.VII, op. cit. See Chap. IV.

2. Minutes, ASS Committee, 3 Jan. 1908, (ibid). The sub-committee to consist of Sir T.F. Buxton, J.G.Alexander, Dr Felkin, a certain Clark, H. Gurney and W.H.Wilberforce.

3. Minutes, ASS Committee, 7 Feb. 1908, E2/12, Vol. VII.

4. Ibid.

Even at the ASS Committee, the view was expressed that "at the present moment amalgamation would not be opportune," the President proposing that "a friendly discussion should be arranged between the two sub-committees, with the understanding that the sub-committee of the ASS should not commit itself to any definite change without consulting the Committee."¹

On 4 December 1908 Fox Bourne told the ASS that "at a meeting of the sub-committee of the APS which had been appointed to consider the above Question, held on 26 November, it had been resolved that it is best for the present to postpone negotiations in furtherance of the suggested amalgamation of the two Societies."² The ASS Committee not only "resolved to concur in the conclusion by the APS Committee", but also went a step further to discharge their sub-committee.³

But on the 29 February 1909, Fox Bourne suddenly died at Torquay. The arrangement for amalgamation began again, this time with greater speed and ^{purpose.} The two sub-committees were once more resuscitated and became active. Their meeting of 3 March 1909 discussed various

1. Ibid.

2. Minutes, ASS Committee, 4 Dec. 1908, E2/12, Vol. VII.

3. Ibid.

tangible recommendations for amalgamation.¹ A few days later the APS Committee, apparently in disarray and embarrassment, approved of the recommendations, in particular the appointment of Lord Monkswell² as chairman, who "as an outsider would be satisfactory to both Societies."³ On the 24 June 1909, the union was officially sealed.⁴

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1. It was recommended that
 - (1) The APS office be retained. (2) the joint Society be called the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' protection Society.
 - (3) Sir T. Fowell Buxton be President, and Rt. Hon. Lord Monkswell Chairman, while Francis William Fox be Vice-Chairman.
 - (4) The present Vice-Presidents and Committee be re-appointed for the joint Society.
 - (5) Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, K.C.M.G., C.S.I. and E. Wright Brooks, J.P. be Treasurers.
 - (6) Travers Buxton, M.A., be appointed Secretary.
 - (7) Offices of the Society to be transferred to Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W. (the Office of the ASS). Since Rt. Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, President of the APS was ailing in health, he became an honorific Vice-President.
 2. Monkswell, 2nd Baron, (Cr.1885); was Robert Collier D.L. J.P.; was Poor Law Officer, and afterwards member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Born in London 26 March 1845; went to Eton and Trinity, Cambridge, where he took 1st class Law Tripos in 1866; Lord-in waiting, 1892-5; Under-Sec. for War 1895, National Liberal; Associated with the CRA. (See Chap. II for relation with Morel). Died 22 Dec. 1909.
 3. Minutes, ASS Committee, item 1650, April 1909. E2/12, Vol.VI
 4. Minutes, ASS Committee, item 1651, 7 May 1909. (ibid). Since "the Secretary reported that June 24 appeared to be a suitable date for bringing about the Union", "the Committee of the APS had arranged for the removal of their furniture to Denison House before that date."

During this period, the Anti-Slavery Society never abandoned its original duty to its wards though the feeling was becoming general that slavery was almost extinct. Yet there still prevailed in the imaginations of men the idea that Africa was the great centre and home of the slave trade and slavery which must be suppressed.¹ Gradually, however, the ASS became faced not only with the problem of "brutal inequality", but also with the feelings of aboriginal races, to which the average rough white man was impervious or did not realize.² It had become obvious that by apparent degrees the nature of the ASS problem had merged with that of the APS.³

The primary function of the APS as a watch-dog for aboriginal rights, and a pressure-group in Imperial affairs is admirably summarized by Leonard Courtney:⁴

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1. Sixty Years Against Slavery: A brief Record of the Work and Aims of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1839-1899 (Jan. 1900) P.4.
 2. Dr Gilbert Murray, A Comparison of the Aims of the Anti-Slavery Society, (the ASS, Denison House, Oct.1955) P.7.
 3. See Chap. IV.
 4. Courtney, Leonard Henry (1st Bt.1906) P.C.M.A.(1832-1918), Son of Sampson Courtney of Alverton House, Penzance; Educ. at St John's Coll. Cambridge, B.L.; Prof. of Political Econ., Univ. Coll. London 1872-75; Under-Sec. Home Office 1880-81; in the C.O. 1881-82, Financial Sec. to Treasury, resigned 1884; Chairman of Committee and Deputy Speaker, 1886-92; M.P. (Unionist) for Bodmin Div., Cornwall, 1885-1900. Of him it was said that "he was a supreme example of the type of good citizen on whom in the last resort the welfare state depends". Vide G.P. Gooch, Life of Lord Courtney (London, 1920) P.617.

"The APS, which, by a fine apostolical succession, is the inheritor of the spirit of Wilberforce and Clarkson, is a sort of appellate court to which complaints may come from any colony - complainants whose rights as such are attacked by the conduct of those amongst whom they reside, and who appeal for assistance in the straits in which they find themselves. The Society is also a sort of advisory body, which every Colonial Minister who is seriously bent on discharging the duties of his office is glad to call to his aid, on whose intelligence he relies, and on whose cooperation he trusts for securing a continual supervision of local agency, a continual maintenance of the true spirit, of the true conduct, which should be observed towards our dependants in those distant lands." 1.

This continual supervision of the local agency was of paramount importance to the Society because it believed that "with a few exceptions, which merely prove the rule, the worst offenders against ignorant and more or less barbarous races in Africa, as elsewhere", were not "the superior officials at home", who formulated the rules of government and issued orders, but "their agents and others on the spot", who, so long as they did not "too openly disregard the letter of their instructions" were "free to misread and pervert them," and who "could easily find

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1. A.F. May 1897, Quoted in Fox Bourne, The APS, Pp. 58-59. A public meeting was held on Wednesday 7 April 1897 "to call attention to the arbitrary and oppressive measures by which European control is being established over native races in Africa and elsewhere". Leonard Courtney, M.P. presided and was supported by such other Liberal M.P.s as John Morley, Dilke, Arnold Forster, A. Birrell, Q.C., Thomas Bayley and Reginald McKenna. Courtney's speech referred to was delivered on this public occasion.

excuses for the gratification of their vanity and love of power - not rarely of their lust and greed- in conduct obnoxious enough in itself - and far more obnoxious and pernicious in its provocation of the little wars" which made up "so large a part of the history of European dominion in Africa....."¹

The APS, believing in a different civilizing process, advocated reasonable persuasion as a way of suppressing barbaric institutions including slavery, because "ignorant and barbaric communities, like undisciplined or perverse children", required "patient and judicious education to enable them to associate satisfactorily with people more intelligent and capable than themselves."² It regarded as an abuse of civilization, "the old assumption that might was the only right, that the aggressor's strength was sufficient warrant for any conquest he was able to make and for any tyranny he was willing to impose."³ Like the Anti-Slavery Society, the APS was an Imperialist movement, but it was the morality of Imperialism that they stood for. They maintained that in the extension of British settlements among "uncivilized communities",

1. H.R. Fox Bourne, European Rivalries and Native Rights in Africa : A Paper read at the Universal Peace Congress, held at Budapest in Sept. 1896. (endorsed by the APS, London)
2. Fox Bourne, The Claims of Uncivilized Races, P.8.
3. Ibid, P.9.

"the moral advantage of the latter should not be less aimed at than the material advantage of the former."¹

It was in no spirit of opposition to colonies or colonization, in no attempt to prevent the growth and the outspread of the English race, but with a desire to make that movement better than it had been, and with a hope to bring into the distant parts of the world the standard which it was so easy to preserve in words, if not to carry out in deeds, that the APS was animated.²

In the discharge of this imperial mission, the role of Fox Bourne was pre-eminent. He never went out to Africa, yet Fox Bourne made himself familiar with the affairs of its tribes. He was obviously an Imperialist, but not of the "baser sort",³ for indeed, the Nigerian Chronicle referred to him as belonging to the type of men "who reproduce the spirit of Christ in their lives - real Empire-makers, for they establish it in the hearts of the people..... (men who are) buffers between the crushing despotism of tyrannical overlords and the unsophisticated and helpless Natives."⁴ As a vital link in the great chain of English philanthropists, beginning with the

1. Ibid. P. 10.

2. Leonard Courtney in A.F. May 1897.

3. Daily Mail, 10 Feb. 1909.

4. Nigerian Chronicle, 12 March 1909.

"Friends" of the 17th century to his own time, Fox Bourne's work was in fact "a necessary part of (the) Imperial mission."¹

Indeed, few men in England could claim to have fought so steadily in the unpopular side as Fox Bourne. Practically without fee or reward, he devoted himself to the welfare of the people who never knew him personally. Denounced by some British newspapers as a Radical sentimentalist, as an enemy of his country, as an agitator and stirrer-up of trouble, he never wavered from his own theory of Imperialism - that no Empire could permanently exist on injustice, and organised or spasmodic oppression.² The one chance of the British Empire standing the assault of time and the inroads of decay, in his view, was that "the Empire should be purified of the commercial exploitation of the natives, the unpunished crimes of personal lust and cruelty, and the horror of what are known as the "Distinguished^{Service} Order", "nigger-hunting" campaigns."³

1. Daily Mail, 10 Feb. 1909.

2. C.H. Norman in Justice, 20 Feb. 1909.

3. See Fox Bourne's views on punitive expeditions which are discussed earlier in this Chapter. He was of the opinion that Colonial officials provoked wars against unarmed natives of Africa, defeated them and then hoped to be awarded medals for distinguished services. In point of fact, in Parliament during the period covered by this study, there were regular questions by interested individuals, mainly Conservatives, about whether medals had been awarded to those who defeated one African chief or the other. See also Justice 20 Feb. 1909.

He hated the hypocrisy which was obvious to him in the activity and doctrine of such a socialist body as the Fabian Society - "superior people who dub themselves reformers" without having "been guilty of passing a humane resolution or collectively doing a humane action."¹

Fox Bourne's influence in the APS was decisive. He held decided views on issues and expressed them strongly, at times with annoying rigidity, but without sensationalism. Some of his tactics were probably positively unrewarding, but his writings won him the respect and regard of those who differed from him. As a writer of marked fluency and ability, he was disinterested and trustworthy, though difficult to work with when his views did not prevail. Yet he was not egotistical; and his modesty probably prevented him from taking the place in the public eye occupied by several persons of inferior talents who did not object to self-advertisement.² He glowed with a steady and humane indignation, which he fed laboriously with Blue Books and Colonial facts sifted and verified. By his quiet manner and catholicity of mind, his suggestion of

1. Fox Bourne's opposition to the Fabians was possibly due to the fact that he was a Liberal and they were Socialists. More probably it was due to the Fabian attitude to Empire. The Fabian Imperialists came to believe that "inferior nations" should not be allowed to stand in the way of progress. See Chap. IV. also Justice 20 Feb. 1909.

2. The Athenaeum, 13 Feb. 1909.

plty even in his most severe denunciations, he commanded the respect of his candid followers, many of whom accepted his conclusions upon trust.¹ The evidence of his sincerity was convincing; but he never seemed to have realised that more than sincere gusto was needed to convince those in power.

The relationship between the APS and the ASS, on the one hand, and their West African wards on the other, was one of sincerity and candidness. Yet they seemed to have over-simplified difficult issues, and tended to advocate straight-forward solutions which were hardly practicable at the time.² Moreover, their influence at this time was greatly undermined by the Colonial Office suspicion of the quality of its intelligence, bearing in mind prejudice against those it called the "mendacious" people on the West Coast of Africa.³ But the fact that the true temper of the Empire came to be regarded as a temper which mingled wisely and in fit proportion the sovereignty of the central authority with the liberty of the consituent areas⁴, indicates that Exeter Hall

1. The Times, 6 Feb. 1909.

2. Vide W.M. MacMillan, The Road to Self-Rule, (London, 1959) P. 60. Although he makes this point in Chap. II of this book, with respect to the role of Exeter Hall in an earlier period, MacMillan nevertheless adds the unacceptable view that they contributed little or nothing to the development of changes which their activities had helped to bring about.

3. Minute of 7 Feb. 1892 by Hemming, op.cit., CO 92/219.

4. Sir Charles Bruce, The True Temper of Empire, (MacMillan, 1912. also Bacon's Essay on Empire quoted by Bruce.

contributed something to the imperial idea of trusteeship which even their action in earlier days had made imperative.

As is to be expected the motives of members were varied. There were some businessmen who probably tried to use the movements as an imperial agency for the promotion of their individual economic motives. There were ex-officials who were either disillusioned with the new tendencies which the current jingo hysteria had bred for the Empire or wanted to use the societies to maintain connection with the power that had deserted them. Cumulatively, however, unlike the Third Party, Exeter Hall at this time had no real economic or vested interests. The bulk of the leadership and followership were religiously inspired. They were greatly supported by the Quaker clans, and this probably gave them that indomitable spirit which always carried them forward even when it had become clear that there was a marked general decline in humanitarian conscience. Their traditional ideals were at this time no longer a deposit of popular hopes and attitudes, but their penetration into all parties in Parliament, gave strength and breadth to their Liberal core. After the amalgamation, the new Society underwent a speedy course of reorganization, inaugurated a strong Parliamentary Committee in 1910, and proceeded to organise the West African Auxiliaries in 1911.

CHAPTER IV.

BRITISH HUMANITARIANS AND

COLONIAL ISSUES.

The amalgamation of 1909 forged into a more compact body what was left of the traditional Exeter Hall. It was, in a sense, a reflection of the new spirit of sober dedication to imperial duty following the hysterical jingoism of the "braggart years".¹ But, in a more intimate sense, amalgamation was a product of internal questionings; it was hoped that with amalgamation effective organisation would bestir humanitarian conscience. This immediately produced concentrated economies, led to the expansion of the Society's headquarters, provided for an organising Secretary, and encouraged the creation of a Parliamentary Committee and Colonial Auxiliaries.²

A prospectus of the new Society issued soon after the amalgamation epitomized this leavened idealism. A distinctly humanitarian organisation,

1. See A.F.Madden, 'Changing Attitudes', op. cit. p. 340

2. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS 8 Dec. 1909, MSS Brit. Emp. S20 E2/12, vol. VII

it claimed to be non-party and undenominational. And since it held rigidly to the view that the relation between the Imperial Government and the Colonies, Protectorates and spheres of influence, was that of trustee whose supreme duty it was to secure the moral and material advancement of its wards, it meant that the Society did not always regard as within its legitimate province whether and when that trusteeship should be terminated. Rather, by addressing itself to the task of combatting hasty laws and decrees which curtailed the liberty of colonial peoples, and other individual acts which often disgraced the Imperial Government and compromised the ideal of British rule, the Society professed its resolute readiness "to facilitate the march of progress by all constitutional means at its disposal" and "to uphold those Christian ideals and traditions of freedom" which had bred the earlier humanitarians.¹

In a presidential oration before the inaugural meeting held on 26 April 1910, Powell Buxton emphasized the continuity of this moral policy. But he had also warned against imprudence. For the new

1. Lagos Standard, 20 Aug. 1910.

society to operate within the frontiers of honesty and responsibility, Buxton implied, it needed mature caution in its sifting and presentation of evidence. Important as this point was, however, Buxton's preoccupation with accurate intelligence was submerged in the general feeling that more vigilance was the issue of the hour. In a chorus disapproving of the activities of many Colonial officials in the Empire,¹ Dilke's controlled dis-

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1. The Society was soon concerned with the activities of some colonial officials. Thus the Committee took up in Parliament most recent cases. On 4 July Joseph King told the Commons how H. Tressing, a mechanic in the P.W.D. Lagos had shot a native watchman, presumably by accident. The Society saw to it that his appointment was terminated, though according to Seeley "not on the ground of culpability, but because the result of his action had impaired his value as an efficient servant of the Govt" HC - Debs. 5s Vol XVIII, 1910, 1307. Again on 28 July 1910, King told the Commons of another case involving a certain Dr. Brand Kent, a Govt. official, who broke into church congregations at Imuku and Isere (S. Nig.), forced them to go out of church on Sunday and carry loads for him. HC. Debs 5s. Vol. XIX 1910, 2344. Also there were cases of illegal actions like the arrest of the Oloye of Oye in July 1910, and illegal floggings in Lagos in 1906 and in Zaria in 1912. See HC. Debs: 5s. Vol. XIX 1910; also Vol. XVII, p. 1016. Minutes, of Sub-Committee, Ass. 3 June 1910, E.2"12, Vol. VII. Minutes, Sub-Committee, Ass, 1 July 1910, (Ibid. Inc. ~~Oct~~) Minutes, Sub-Committee Ass. 5 Aug. 1910, (Ibid) Minutes, Sub-Committee Ass, 1 Nov. 1912, E2/13, Vol. VIII

satisfaction with "the application of ordinances which could hardly be equally suitable to Lagos and to Munshi country" was given greater weight when no less than the Lord Bishop of Hereford spoke against the constant danger of individual officials deteriorating in their offices in distant lands.¹

Pre-occupation with ideals, however, did not blind men to the necessity of immediate reorganisation. As already indicated, a three-pronged plan, involving the improvement of the home administrative machinery, the creation of a versatile parliamentary committee, and the inauguration of Colonial Auxiliaries, was expected to strengthen the Society.² But since achievement of the latter two aims depended on the excellence of the main secretarial and administrative bureau, this objective was immediately pursued. It was directly bound up

1. Nigerian Chronicle, 5 July 1910.

2. A London Correspondent in Nigerian Times, 9 Aug. 1910.

with the appointment of John Harris¹ as the organising secretary.

This choice was neither curious nor questionable. A man of considerable energy and almost infectious humanitarian touch, Harris had been to Africa as a missionary and could be relied upon to face African problems with authoritative insight and broadmindedness.² As organising Secretary of the Congo Reform Association, personal equations had led to disagreements with Morel who could not "like the man;³ but Harris had played a

1. Harris, (Sir) John Kt. in 1933. Born at Wantage on 29 July 1874. Married Alice, 2nd daughter of A Seeley, Frome. Spent some years in tropical Africa, (in the Congo), first as missionary, later as traveller in other parts of West Africa as well. Was an organising Sec. of the C R A, and Organising Sec. of the AS and APS after amalgamation. Later contested Camberwell N.W. 1922 as Liberal; North Hackney, 1924; West Wilts, 1931; M.P. (L.) North Hackney, 1923-4. Died 30 April, 1940
2. In his book Dawn in Darkest Africa (1912) Harris, though a Christian minister, looks at African social institutions with friendly tolerance. Thus he did not condemn such a practice as polygamy.
3. Morel to Holt, 7 Oct. 1912, 18/8, JHP

dynamic and commendable role and never lost fidelity to the humanitarian cause. When on 7 January 1910, Harris agreed to organise the new Society, it was clear that he would bring to it the same crusading zeal which had characterised his Congo work.¹ His arrival occasioned invigorating transformations. Home auxiliaries were either inaugurated or improved, two sub-committees now supplemented the general committee,² and by coordinating the traditional loyalty of Travers Buxton (the corresponding Secretary) with his own unalloyed, though salaried³ devotion, Harris launched the Society into a new vista of vigorous efficiency.

This robust reorganisation was reflected in another manifestation - the formation of a Parliamentary Committee. Following the example of the APS in 1906, the Committee of the Society,

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1. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS, 3 Dec. 1909, E2/12, Vol VII
Minutes, Sub-Committee, Ass, 8 Dec. 1909, 7 Jan, 1910 (ibid)
 2. Minutes, Sub-Committee, 7 Jan. 1910 (ibid)
 3. Harris had agreed to organise the Society on a Salary of £500 p.a.

on 4 February 1910, resolved to enlist the interest and sympathy of Members of Parliament.¹ At a meeting held in the House of Commons on 6 March 1910 to "consider the question of forming a Committee of M.Ps. interested in the work of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, who would use their influence, in co-operation with the Society, for the promotion of the objects at which it aims", the Parliamentary Committee was launched.² Until he was succeeded by J.W.Wilson,³ Sir Charles Dilke⁴ presided over this Committee, and, probably because of pitiful respect which all sides of the House had for him, he helped to rescue the Committee from that wayward perversity into which excess enthusiasm might have led it. The formation of this Committee, however,

1. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS, 4 Feb., 1910, E2/12, Vol VII

2. ASR and AF, April 1911

3. Wilson, Rt. Hon. John William, P.C. 1911, Liberal M.P. North Worcestershire, 1895-1922; Chemical manufacturer; born at Edgbaston, 22 Oct. 1858; eldest son of J.E.Wilson of Wyddrington, Edgbaston. Ed. at Grove House School, Tottenham; and abroad; J.P. Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Clubs: Reform, National Liberal. Died 18 June 1932.

4. See Gwyn and Tuckwell, op. cit.

owed much to the ubiquitous efforts of Noel Buxton¹ whose transparent idealism transcended imperial horizons: his far-fetched and forlorn hope "that the formation of the Parliamentary Committee would lead to the inauguration of an inter-Parliamentary group embracing all Christian Europe",² was, however, merely one of these ephemeral oddities.

The Society claimed that membership of this Committee rose from 70 in February 1910 to 100 by April 1911,³ yet it does not seem that regular membership constituted a very compact or compulsive body. It was mainly permeated by Liberal, Radical and Irish members, who, although they canvassed

1. Noel-Buxton, Noel Edward; (1869-1948); 2nd son of Sir T. Powell Buxton, 3rd Bt: Educ: Harrow; Trinity, Cambridge; History Honours 1889; A.D.C. in Australia to his father (the Governor), 1896; served on Whitechapel Board of Guardians and Central Unemployment Body; was Member of Home Office Departmental Committee on Lead Poisoning; wounded by political assassin, Oct. 1914, while on mission to secure adhesion of Balkan States in the war; Liberal M.P. for Whitby, 1905-6; Labour M.P. for N. Norfolk 1910-18, 1922-30; Minister of Agric. and Fisheries, Jan- Nov 1924, and 1929-1930. Later joint President of the Anti-Slavery Soc., 1931-34; Published books on Europe.

2. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASAPS, 3 March, 1911, Vol. VII Nigerian Chronicle, 5 Aug. 1910

3. ASR and AF. April 1911
The most important members of this Committee are mentioned and their careers sketched in appropriate places in this study.

African rights, were in most cases also ventilating individual or party grievances. But by soliciting and gaining the adhesion of Labour members, the Society broadened its base in the Commons. During a recruitment drive in 1912, John Harris held interviews with J. Ramsay Macdonald and Arthur Henderson "as to the creating of greater interest in the Society's work among the Labour Party in Parliament and their supporters" in the country.¹ But the Labour Movement itself was only beginning to achieve a certain amount of cohesiveness without which concerted action was impossible. Composed of discontented groups superficially united by hatred of laissez-faire, the representatives of Labour had been torn asunder by personal feuds and pedantic ideologies. However, the Boer War, the close of which somehow stemmed the violent tide of destructive Imperialism, had brought the Labour leadership together with pro-Boer Radicals, and in the new spirited revulsion against militarism they had some semblance of unity in pacifism. Moreover, dissatisfaction with the opportunist leadership of the

1. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS, 6 Dec. 1912 item 2248, Vol. VIII.

Fabian Imperialists (who, it seemed, were too impatient of native rights if they obstructed general progress) had thrown Macdonald and his supporters into closer unity with Keir Hardie and the Independent Labour Party.¹ They did not deny the general belief that British rule was the most enlightened of all, except that with them this faith was almost nullified by too wary alertness lest another vicious form of capitalist imperialism would engulf the empire in another, and perhaps more savage, warfare.

This understanding between Exeter Hall and the Labour and Liberal parties proved a useful expedient; at least, it could be shown that the humanitarian movement was becoming part of the whole movement towards democracy and freedom.² Macdonald always pointed at the administrative inadequacies of the "men on the spot", maintaining that the same standards of morality traditional to British Society should be extended to far away lands.³ The Independent Labour Party, for its part, was officially opposed to the

1. See A.F.Madden in New Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol III, 'Changing Attitudes and Widening Responsibilities', pp. 348-350.

2. Leonard Barnes, The Duty of Empire, p.8

3. See J. Ramsay Macdonald, in Labour and the Empire, (1907), pp. 26-27, 39-41, 44.

exploitation of the economically backward races by the more advanced and the introduction of capitalism as a substitute for the economic structure of native society.¹ And Gilbert Murray represented the Liberal ideal when he reminded Britain of "the duty of endeavouring by strenuous and honest sympathy, justice, and even magnanimity, to obliterate our cruel conquests, and justify our world-wide usurpation".² But the professions of political parties did not always represent an actual performance.³ Even then, it was not always easy to harmonise a party programme which declared for a relationship with the less-developed races which would prepare them "as speedily as possible for self-government",⁴ with another creed which held

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1. From The Constitution of the Independent Labour Party; Also cited in Charles Rowden Buxton, Black Man's Rights, p.13
 2. Gilbert Murray, 'The Exploitation of Inferior Races in Ancient and Modern Times', pp. 119-20 in The Heart of the Empire, (London, 1902)
 3. See R. Palme Dutt, The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1952) pp. 317-47.
 4. The Constitution of the I.L.P. also cited in C.R.Buxton, op. cit.

that this did not come within its competence.¹

In the event, the two philosophies mutually undermined themselves.

The Colonial Office Vote had always been an opportune moment to harry the government on West African questions. Also, it had almost always betrayed remarkable ignorance amongst the defenders of African interests. A steady and sure supply of accurate colonial intelligence was very vital if the Parliamentary front was to operate with responsibility and confidence. Buxton's incessant emphasis on this requirement perhaps reflected his own personal failings since his characteristic patience and tact was at this time degenerating into laxity. But it was also symptomatic of tactical questionings. Prudence had a great asset - it could convince the public and the Government that the movement was led by responsible men.

It might, therefore, be argued that the West African Auxiliaries came into being to provide that incontrovertible evidence which Buxton considered most vital to its advocacy. Yet, the idea of

1. See Lagos Standard, 20 Aug. 1910 for the prospect us of the amalgamated society which stated the continuity of the previous policy, i.e. that the Society would not be involved in political actions. Note that with the arrival of John Harris this creed was no longer sacrosanct.

forming Colonial Auxiliaries, as distinct from those in Britain, had always been an implicit faith of the two Societies prior to amalgamation. The original Constitution of the ASS, drawn up in 1839, had recommended to the Anti-Slavery friends throughout the world to form Auxiliary Societies.¹ And on the APS side, a much more positive expression had been given to the idea. As late as 1891, as we have seen, Fox Bourne had called on the "patriotic residents" on the West Coast to form local communities in order to give useful information to his Society.² But insufficient finances tended to check exuberant hopes; and, in any case, the period before amalgamation

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1. 1839 Constitution of the Ass, Section IX; for a quick reference, see the ASS Annual Report for 1906.
 2. Letters of 13 Nov. 1801 from Fox Bourne to the Gold Coast Chronicle, 21 and 28 Dec. 1891. Also see reference in David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana (Oxford, 1963) p. 330.

had seen a remarkable decline in colonial conscience.¹ In an era of salaried humanitarians, an extensive project like the formation of Colonial Auxiliaries needed extraordinary enthusiasm to carry it through. In this sense, therefore, the inauguration of the Auxiliaries was a function of the amalgamation itself.

But these circumstances do not explain why West Africa was the first colonial ground where this experiment was tried. And, in another sense, the formation of the West African Auxiliaries was a West African phenomenon. Early involvement of West Africans in sophisticated political actions antecedent to any other in the Continent, is, more or less, well-known. The political agitations of South African natives under the aegis of American negro missionaries, and the more important but theatrical "Ethiopianism",² were later developments.

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1. G.P.Gooch doubted whether Governor Eyre would have been brought to book if he had hanged Gordon in 1901 instead of 1865; and then told how the destruction of African natives was both the business and pleasure of Kipling's heroes: "When Blind Dick Helder in the Sudan heard the fire of a gun shot at Africans he exclaimed rapturously: 'Give 'em hell! Oh, give 'em hell!'". See Gooch, 'Imperialism' in The Heart of the Empire (London, 1902) pp. 308-397.
 2. For the then importance of 'Ethiopianism', See London Standard, 29 June, 1906, 'Ethiopianism: Equality claims - Africa for Africans'.

Not implying that West Africans were more "permanently factious and persistently disloyal"¹ than other colonial peoples in Africa, these agitations, which could be traced to the 1850's, socially reflected the economic position of political Creoldom. Social and economic ascendancy (however limited) by the liberated slaves had been reflected in a keen participation in missionary and commercial life of the West African Colonies; but, as clerks in the administrations, they had also done yeoman service to the Imperial Government at a time when 'Coast' mortality was high. By the 1880's, however, this position of confidence had been undermined, first by improved medical services which dispensed with this African 'clerkly' class; and, secondly, by the educated African attempt to gain unlimited political and religious ascendancy. Novel ideas of church independence and curious political creeds acquired in Sierra Leone, which were given literary and political piquancy by men like Edward Blyden, alarmed the Colonial authorities. They not only used spurious

1. Cf. E.D. Morel, Nigeria: Its Peoples and Problems (1912) pp. 81, 220. Also Perham, Lugard, Vol. II, p. 587.

racist arguments to question the ability, but also severely curtailed the functions, of this educated African elite. This produced frustrations which were immediately translated into protests.¹ When, therefore, on 4th July, 1910, Fowell Buxton made his 'Appeal'² to West Africans to form Auxiliaries,

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1. For the details of these developments See Jean Herskovitts Kopittoff, A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The 'Sierra Leionians' in Yoruba, (Wisconsin, 1965), David Kimble, op. cit; J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria (Ibadan, 1965), Ayandele, Ph.D. thesis, op. cit; and J.B. Webster: The African Churches among the Yorubas, 1888-1922 (Oxford, 1964.)
 2. This famous 'Appeal', made on 14 July, 1910 and directed particularly to Nigerians, publicly announced the wish of the Home Committee for West African Auxiliaries to be formed. Buxton remarked that "in certain parts of Africa frequent acts of injustice are constantly occurring which bring the British administration into contempt; systems of unmitigated slavery and slave trade prevail, and we fear are increasing. Therefore, "the time has come to invite the enlightened and humane British subjects on the African continent to organise themselves into responsible committees, with the object of watching over the liberties of local British subjects; assisting the Home Committee in their work of maintaining such rights and securing freedom for those unfortunate natives whose liberties are at present taken from them, and their persons subjected to barbarous and inhuman treatment in the economic interest of organised speculators". See Nigerian Times, 9 Aug. 1910
For discussion on the establishment of the Auxiliaries, see Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS, 5 Aug. 1910. item 1299.

there were aggrieved enthusiasts¹ ready to answer the call.

This favourable reaction to Buxton's message was reflected in attempts to organise the Auxiliaries even before the representatives of the Society arrived to formally institute them. On 6th April 1911, Harris and his wife arrived at Accra and launched the Gold Coast Auxiliary amidst festivities.² It would seem that the affairs of the Auxiliary were in responsible hands. Its first President was Philip C. Randolph, a barrister who

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1. Lagosians, in particular, were also already greatly involved in agitations against some measures adopted by the Colonial government. They had protested against Deportation and Sedition Ordinances, were protesting against the establishment of a separate church for white men in Lagos, and against racial discrimination generally. See, Kimble, op. cit. Ajayi, op. cit; and Ayandale, op. cit. For Parl. discussion of the Colonial Church, see also HC Dels. 5s Vol XV, 1910, 741-743; 1036-7. Vol. XVII, 1910, 1017, HC Debs 5s. Vol. XIX, 1911, 1017; HC Debs. 5s Vol. XIX, 1910, 34; For protests in Britain against the Sedition Ordinance See HC Debs. 5s. Vol. XV, 1910, 1035-6 HC Debs. 5s Vol. XVI 1910, 3.
 2. At Accra, they were met by several local merchants and others interested in the Colony. They lunched at the Castle with the Ag. Governor, Major Bryan, and the Secretary of Native Affairs P.W.Crowther, and were reported to have discussed native welfare with them. They visited, Bai Shebro, a Sierra Leone Chief exiled for his complicity in the Hut Tax insurrection, and saw the cocoa farms in the interior. Nigerian Times, 18 April, 1911.

had been among the deputation which was appointed by the educated Africans of Accra to wait on the Gold Coast Governor and "impress upon him the opposition of the people" to both the Town Councils Ordinance and the Crown Lands Bill of 1894. With the support it got from other ~~p~~ eminent lawyers in Accra,¹ the

1. Other officers of the Accra Auxiliary were as follows:

- 1st. Vice-President: Chief John Vanderpuye, 'the educated divisional chief of Ussher Town who' according to Kimble, 'lived comfortably in European style'. It is said of him that at a time when there were several scandals, he was unblemished. Thus early in 1894 Ag. Gov. Hodgson had appointed him as the third member of the LegCo, where in 1897 he had opposed the Lands Bills of that year with Cheetham.
- 2nd Vice-President: Dr. E.W.Quartey-Papafio, who had edited Hogba - Skul Ngmallo, a paper for the Methodists, before the turn of the 19th Century, and who was related to other educated members of the local leadership.
- 3rd Vice-President: J.W.Sawyer.
- Hon. Sec: Charles J. Bannerman: Barrister of Accra; later he became the president of the Accra branch of the ARPS in 1912. When he was away another Accra lawyer, V.J.Buckle acted for him.
- Asst. Sec: G.L.E.Smith
- Fin. Sec: J.D.Garshong
- Hon. Treasurer: S.O.Akinwumi, a member of Lagos community in Accra; and a native merchant of some standing.

Other executive members included:

- Alhaji Alli - one of the Headmen or chiefs of the Hausa Community, and son of former officer Ali of the Gold Coast Regiment of the WAFF and ADC to HE Gov. Nathan and Gov. Rodger;
- Okai Mensah Tackie - of the Abola Quarters of Accra, and the grandson of Yaote, one of the Mentsemei of Accra;
- George Mettle - a Goldsmith and one of the principal councillors of the Mantse, of the Asere quarters of Accra;

Auxiliary might have been expected to devote^c itself to vigorous pursuits. After inaugurating the Gold Coast Auxiliary, Harris and his wife left Accra for Lagos.

In response to Buxton's appeal, Lagosians had held meetings to discuss the formation of an auxiliary. At a meeting held on 30th Aug. 1910, Bishop James Johnson, who had been a corresponding member of the APS and the ASS, openly canvassed the formation of a Lagos Auxiliary. Johnson's attitude represented a typical African reaction to the colonial situation. To Johnson, as with others, the fact of the Partition which had treated Africa as 'no man's land', the role of the various commercial

Footnote 1. continued from previous page.

John Tettah Morton - a master carpenter and one of the principal councillors of the Mantse of Gbese Quarters of Accra.

Timothy Laing - a member of the Fanti community; editor of Eastern Star and Akapim Chronicle, was among the editors who had attended the inaugural meeting of the West African Congress in London later in 1921. In 1889, he was one of these who had proposed a formal scheme for municipal govt. that left officials and chiefs out of account; Vide Kimble, op. cit. p.417 for the latter:

companies in Africa, revival of slavery in San Thomé and Principe, domestic slavery in Yorubaland and Slave Trade in Iboland, rough practices of colonial officials, incidence of forced labour and oppressive legislation - all these meant that there ought to exist a local agency to supply information to friends in Britain whose supposed personal influence and representation with the Colonial Office might have been expected to have some weight. Though primarily concerned with protecting African welfare, Johnson hoped that connection with the parent society with its cosmopolitan character would broaden the African interest and sympathy in the wider humanity.¹ Its claim that rather than oppose the Government, it would help to prevent British rule from degenerating into an oppression which might taint its prestige in the African mind, tempted some of its fire-eating critics to regard the Auxiliary as an agent of British imperialism. This was merely commonsense tactics in those difficult colonial days. What particularly worried the men

1. Nigerian Times, 6 Sept. 1910.

Those present at the meeting included Hon. C.A. Sapara Williams, W.R. Harding, S.H. Pearse, Chris Johnson, C.J. de Rocha, wealthy merchant and financier, A. Nichol, J. Bright Davies, J.T. Munis, J. Osho Davies, Rev. S.A. Coker, Dr. Nojola Agbebi, and Herbert Macaulay who at that instance acted as Secretary.

who listened to Bishop Johnson (apart from dissatisfaction with uncomfortable ordinances which fell on them month after month) was how to bring to bay those he called the "heartless and conscienceless money-grabbers" whom in their zeal for great profits cared nothing for African misery. On the motion of Dr. Agbebi, that meeting in fact transformed itself into an Auxiliary.¹ Therefore, before Harris finally arrived on 3 May 1911 to sanction it, the Auxiliary was already inaugurated and membership canvassed. The earlier adhesion of prominent Christians, Moslems and even pagans was significant of the spontaneity of

1. Ibid.

Officers of the Lagos Auxiliary as originally constituted were as follows:

Bishop James Johnson - President; Bishop Oluwole, Dr. Mojola Agbebi and Hon. C.A. Sapara Williams - Vice-Presidents; C.A. da Rocha - Treasurer; S.H. Pearse F.R.G.S. - Local Sec; T. Lloyd Harrison - Asst. Local Sec; J. Bright Davies - Corresp. Sec; Chris Johnson - Asst. Corresponding Sec.

The objects of the Auxiliary as in Paragraph 4 of the Auxiliary Constitution were:

- (a) "to supply the Home Committee with carefully considered information upon which it may take action with the Home Govt.
- (b) to educate and organise public opinion upon principles which govern the activities of the Society;
- (c) to secure and administer the local financial assistance which is so necessary to successful propaganda". It also stressed that local expenses must be met from local income.

Lagos opinion.¹ After a splendid banquet at George's Hall,² highly enlivened by bouts of self-congratulations,³ Harris and his wife left Lagos for the Congo and the "islands" from where they returned to England.

This meant that the Sierra Leone Auxiliary was inaugurated without their formal sanction.⁴

1. Nigerian Times, 6 Sept. 1910.

2. In a speech delivered at the banquet, Harris showed moderate good sense when he reminded his audience that opposition to Colonial officials should be restrained because, as he said, they "are not free agents" and "the Governor is not superior to the King". Although he advised the Lagosians to fight for their rights constitutionally and responsibly, the white officials in Lagos were apparently unimpressed. They were conspicuously absent from the reception. Even Gov. Egerton, who had been specifically invited, did not attend on the pretext of a pre-engagement for that evening. Lloyd Harrison to Travers Buxton, 31 May 1911 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19 D2/2 Nigerian Times, 6 June, 1911; Lagos Weekly Record, 15 May 1911, Nigerian Chronicle, 26 May 1911.

3. According to Lloyd Harrison, the occasion was "a complete success as far as the entire native population was concerned, without any discordant note - all was jubilation and gratitude towards the great society for the amelioration of the subject races under the protection of The Great Powers of Europe" Harris is also said to have had a private audience with Dr. Randle and Dr. Obasa of Ikijaj, the President and Secretary respectively of the Lagos People's Union, one of the most dynamic political groups in the Colony. Lloyd Harrison to Travers Buxton, 31 May, 1911. Lagos Standard, 10 May, 1911

4. W.F.Smith to Edward Hughes, April, 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G 244

The formation of this Auxiliary featured a ding-dong struggle for recognition between two competing groups, respectively led by C.D.Hotobah-During, a lawyer and a former corresponding member of the Society, and Rev. J.T.Roberts, acting principal of the Wesleyan Boys' High School, Freetown. Divided by local politics and personal animosities,¹ the leaders only managed to compose the schism in July 1912² with the

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1. It appears that During was supported by local organisations, namely the Eastward Ratepayers' Association led by Rev. S.T.Peacock, and the Women's Progressive Union led by Mrs. Rose Palmer. During claimed that these were "two of the best Societies in Sierra Leone of sincere Africans". But it is clear that this represented the lower ranks of the Society. For the views of this faction see:
 During to Buxton, 9 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.244
 During to Buxton, 7 Feb. 1912 *ibid* also D1/10
 Buxton to During, 19 Feb. 1912 *ibid*, also D2/3
 See MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19
 2. For steps towards amalgamation,
 During to Buxton, 5 March 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G. 244.
 During to Buxton, 20 March 1912, *ibid*
 Roberts to Buxton, 13 April 1912 *Ibid*
 Buxton to During, 22 July, 1912, *Ibid*.

triumph of Roberts' faction¹, now led by E.H.Cummings, a Justice of the Peace and one of the Charity Commissioners of the city of Freetown. A branch Auxiliary was organised at Bonthe,² but the existence of the Sierra Leone Auxiliaries was never more than fitful.³

One of the things which struck Harris when he visited the Gold Coast in April 1911 was that in

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1. On 10 April 1912, Roberts told Buxton that the inaugural meeting of his Auxiliary was to take place in Wilberforce Hall; and that although membership was not large, it included "some of the most influential members of the community as the Mayor, the Archdeacon, and the Editor of the Weekly News". Roberts' faction was certainly the more important, having in its fold such important men as C.May, Editor of the Weekly News, who had in fact invited others to form the Auxiliary, Rev. J.R.Nicholas of the U.M.C. who always spoke of the necessity of unity and civic responsibility and the formation of "a whole front". J.T.Roberts became Secretary. Roberts to Buxton, 13 April 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.244. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13 April 1912, Roberts to Buxton, 12 Aug. 1912. MSS. S.22. G.244. Also, D2/3 of MSS Brit. Emp. S.19
 2. On 12 Aug. 1913, Roberts told Buxton that ministers and leading natives joined with enthusiasm; it seemed, however, that Roberts had exaggerated the importance of these Auxiliaries; especially in view of the fact that he was still at that date worried by the luke-warmness of During and his confederates. See Roberts to Buxton, 12 Aug. 1912. S22. G.244 Buxton to During 22 July 1912. *ibid*
 3. Note that the Gambian Auxiliary was not really inaugurated until 1917. (For this auxiliary see Mss. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.207 and 208.

spite of the availability of many trained African medical doctors there, none of them was employed in the Government Service. This disability was rendered more irritating to the African medical community because several Government doctors were permitted to engage in outside practice, were even allowed to purchase their drugs from the Government Stores at cost price, which meant that they obtained them duty free, whereas an African practitioner did not enjoy this privilege. Harris was of the opinion that the exclusion of Gold Coast Africans from the Medical Service was unjustified. There were Africans, he pointed out, with higher degrees than white doctors engaged in Government Service. Secondly he felt there was justification for the anger of the Africans who had incurred great expenditure in going to England and Scotland to obtain their education only to find at the last moment that the Government discriminated against them. This discrimination was economically unwise for, as Harris pointed out, the employment of a greater portion of African doctors would considerably reduce expenditure by reducing the possibility of frequent furloughs to England, which were so necessary in the case of white doctors. Moreover

African doctors had told him that they were not much worried about the salary structure, that they were willing to accept quite moderate remuneration, provided they were allowed to augment their incomes by private practice. The point might, on the other hand, be made that white men and women would object to coloured medical attendance. Harris agreed that the argument might have weight if such a situation were likely to arise; he found that such circumstances were inconceivable in the Gold Coast. Even if such objection existed, there was still an abundance of work amongst African soldiers, policemen and Government employees, where the services of African medical men with command of native languages and customs would seem to be invaluable. He told the Committee of the Society that unless the existing unsatisfactory conditions were changed, Africans would refuse to spend large sums in preparing for a medical profession, and would probably devote their activities to other spheres less useful, or even inimical, to the welfare of the colony.¹

1. Harris to Committee of the Society, 9 April, 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19. D3/1. See also Report by Harris in ASR and AF, July 1911.

When he returned to England, Harris took up vigorously with the Colonial Office and members of parliament, the treatment given to the Medical fraternity, particularly in the Gold Coast. On 5 June, he led a Society deputation to the Colonial Office where they discussed with Lewis Harcourt "the question of the disability imposed upon the medical profession" in the Gold Coast, the deputation urging that "a proportionate number of native doctors qualified for practice should be employed in Government positions". Although Harcourt admitted that the points advanced by Harris were sound, he nevertheless, pointed out that there were several "difficulties" with which the question was surrounded.¹ Travers Buxton thereafter urged on the Gold Coast Auxiliary to summon a meeting immediately, inviting all the African medical men in Accra to discuss the matter, and to prepare a short petition to the Governor for transmission to the Secretary of State. He advised Bannerman to lay special emphasis upon opening the hospitals to African doctors, and to insist that "in all ordinary outside practice of a private nature the drugs used

1. Minutes of Sub-Committee, ASS, 7 June 1912 item 2173, E2/13, Vol. VIII. Buxton to Bannerman, 10 June, 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22, G.210, also S.19. D1/11.

should bear the duty which outside practitioners" usually paid.¹ On the 28 June 1912, the Auxiliary convened the meeting as advised and instructed Dr. Quartey-Papafio, who was a member of a Deputation from the Gold Coast to the Secretary of State in connection with the Forest Ordinance, to give the Committee the assistance required on this question.² But in spite of repeated requests, Dr. Quartey-Papafio, who was now angry with the Committee for the views of some of its members on the Forest Ordinance and Land Policy in general, refused to see the Committee or give them the benefit of his advice and knowledge.³

Not discouraged by this apparent lack of enthusiasm shown by a representative of its wards, the Committee sent another deputation to Harcourt and caused questions to be put in Parliament. On 7 October 1912, MacCallum Scott took Harcourt to task over the refusal by the Colonial Office to appoint Dr. MC.F.Easmon⁴ to the Gold Coast because he

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1. Buxton to Bannerman, 10 June 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.216
 2. Bannerman to Buxton, 28 June 1912 (ibid)
 3. Buxton to Bannerman, 6 Aug. 1912 (ibid)
 4. M.B.B.S. (London), M.R.C.S. (England) L.R.C.P. (London), Until then House Surgeon to the Huntingdon County Hospital, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.248.

was "a person of native African descent". Harcourt in his reply confirmed that Dr. Easmon "recently applied for an appointment in the West African Medical Staff", but was not selected "as only candidates of European parentage" were "eligible under the Regulations".¹

The special circumstances of the Gold Coast medical men, however, gave members of the Parliamentary Committee of the Society an opportunity to examine other aspects of medical administration in West Africa. On 26 November 1912, F.W.Jowett, a Labour M.P., had asked the Secretary of State whether in Calabar there were hospitals for the exclusive use of Africans and non-Africans respectively, and whether African doctors, no matter how high their qualifications, were "disqualified by reason of their colour from ministering to the sick of either of these institutions", both of which were maintained, to a considerable extent, by revenue drawn from the Africans themselves. Harcourt admitted that there was an African and a European hospital at Calabar, administered by Government medical officers, but could not say whether any of the officers

1. ASR and AF Jan 1913. also Harris to D. Sackey Quarco-Pome, 23 Sept. 1912. S.22. G.210. Also S.19. D3/6.

in charge were Africans. The true state of affairs, was, however, revealed to Parliament on 4 December of the same year, when in answer to Edmund Harvey's question as to what public appointments in the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Lagos were open to "coloured medical men of African descent", Colonel Seeley, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, said that three African Medical Officers were employed by the Government of Sierra Leone, four by the Government of Southern Nigeria, but none was employed in the Gold Coast.¹

1. ASR. and AF Jan. 1913.

Jowett, Rt. Hon. Frederick William, P.C. 1924; J.P. born Bradford 1864; son of Nathan Jowett of Bradford. For 15 years City Councillor and 8 years Chairman of Public Health Committee; twice President of I.L.P.; Chairman of the Labour Party Conference, 1932. Labour M.P. West Bradford 1906-18; East Bradford, 1922-24; and 1929-31; First Commissioner for Works, 1924. Publication: The Socialist and the City. Died 1 Feb. 1944.

Harvey, Thomas Edmund, Hon. LL.D. (Leeds); Master of the Guild of St. George, 1934-51; Chairman, National Loan Collection Trust; Born in Leeds 4 Jan 1875; eldest son of Wm. Harvey of Leeds; Educ. at Bootham School, York; Yorkshire Coll. Leeds; and Christ Church Oxford; Univs. of Berlin and Paris. B.A. (Vict.) 1893; M.A. (Oxford) 1900; 1st Class Literae Humaniores, 1897; Asst. in Br. Museum, 1900-04; Warden of Toynbee Hall, 1906-11; Member of L.C.C. 1904-07; Member of Central (Unemployed) Body, 1906-10; Member of Standing Committee on Boy Labour in the Post Office, 1910-17; Parliamentary Private Sec. (unpaid) to Sir Ellis Griffith, K.C. 1912-13 and to C.F.G. Masterman, 1913-14. M.P. (Ind. Progressives) combined English Univs. 1937-45. Many publications including The Rise of the Quakers (1905) Member of the Society of Friends. Club. National Liberal. Died 3 May 1955.

On 6 December of the same year, the Committee of the Society discussed the medical question and reviewed its activity in the House of Commons and came to the conclusion that "the Colonial Office persisted in its attitude".¹ Articles in the Reporter dealing with the same subject had produced no marked result. A publicised petition to the Colonial Office on the matter produced no changes.² Although by May 1913, Travers Buxton was still hoping that the Society would "get a debate on the Colonial Office Vote with the disabilities imposed on native medical men", the Society, had only succeeded "after a good deal of slogging" to make some people begin to "think about this question".³ One of these was Morel.

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1. Minutes Sub-Committee, 6 Dec. 1912, E2/13, Vol. VIII
 2. Quarco-Pome to Buxton, 24 Jan. 1913. Brit. Emp. MSS. S.22 G.210
 3. Buxton to Quarco-Pome, 15 May 1913. (ibid.)
(For the general role of the Society on the Medical question vide MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.247.)

On the 28 March, 1913, E.D. Morel in a long editorial in the African Mail, criticised the official attitude on the question as unsatisfactory, unjust and shortsighted. Giving a list of Africans who had distinguished themselves in the medical field, Morel wondered by the experiment in employing them was stopped. He regarded the objection that European doctors should never be "juniors" to Africans or that Europeans should not be attended to by Africans as "singularly puerile" to justify "banning" African doctors from service. He regarded as "candidly" unfair and unstatesmanlike the current practice of sending Africans to act as dispensers in the interior. He advocated the establishment of a Native Medical Service if it was still the determined policy of the Government to exclude Africans from the West African Service. Morel declared:

"Apart from the law, this is the only field where the ambitious coast native has recourse to; but even then it is unfair and unstatesmanlike to deny service to people who could help check and cure the diseases rife in that part: it is a duty to the protected to give them all benefits of medical care....." 1

1. African Mail, 28 March 1913 Editorial: 'Native Medical Men and the West African Colonial Service'.

The importance which the Colonial Office attached to these views expressed by Morel is seen in the long minutes and memoranda submitted on this editorial.¹ But these views explain the existing attitudes of the Colonial Office to this question.

Up to 1902, when the medical services of West African Colonies and Protectorates were amalgamated to form the the West African Medical Staff, there appeared to have been no definite rules as to the number or proportion of African Medical Officers to be appointed to the service of each dependency. It would appear that the question depended to some extent on whether a suitable African medical man was available. But as a rule they were appointed to lower rates of salary than those of their European colleagues. However a Committee of 1901 which included the Principal Medical Officers of the three West African dependencies examined the question and concluded that it was dissatisfied with the services given by African doctors. According to their report:

1. See CO 554/15.

"The Committee are strongly of opinion that it is, in general, inadvisable to employ natives of West Africa as medical officers in the Government service.... they do not believe either that in professional capabilities West African native doctors are on a par, except in very rare instances, with European doctors, or that they possess the confidence of European patients on the Coast... They have already been tried in Southern Nigeria without success. It is possible that in a few isolated cases, for example, at hospitals where the patients are always or practically always natives, it may be desirable to employ a native doctor, but such cases may be regarded as exceptional, and may be left to the discretion of the local Governments...."¹

It was accordingly laid down by Chamberlain in 1902 that while African medical men might continue to be appointed to the Government Service, they should not be admitted to the West African Medical Staff. This principle was adhered to ever since. The subsequent attitude of the Colonial Office therefore was that possession of British medical qualifications did not enable a doctor to an automatic appointment; and that there was not such a large number of West Africans with medical qualifications anxious to enter the Service. A. Fiddien felt that it was inadvisable to encourage Africans to come to Britain to study medicine: "the

1. Quoted in C.O. Memo by A. Fiddien, 28 April 1913, on African Mail Editorial by E.D. Morel on 'Native medical officers in West Africa' CO 554/15

native of West Africa will make a good deal more money by going into trade at a comparatively early age ... as soon as he has learned the three Rs", he declared. He emphasised the fact that racial feeling was running high in West Africa and must be reckoned with as a fact. European Officers, Fiddian pointed out, objected strongly to being looked after by African medical men, and the difficulty would be intensified as more officers took their wives out¹ with them.

This question was continuously kept before the Colonial Office since it was dealt with by another departmental Committee on the West African Medical Staff in 1908. As a result of the findings of that Committee, and the opinions expressed by a Conference of Principal Medical Officers at Accra in 1909, the Advisory Medical and Sanitary Committee for Tropical Africa was invited to consider the question in 1911. They expressed the opinion that the exclusion of Africans from the West African Medical Staff should be maintained, and that there was not sufficient demand to justify the institution of a locally trained service of licensed medical practitioners.

1. CO Memo by A.Fiddian, 28 April, 1913, CO 554/15

They recommended, however, the institution of a more systematic training of carefully selected natives for the work of sanitary inspectors, vaccinators, hospital assistants, and other subordinate posts. They were of opinion that the existing arrangements for the employment of native medical officers need not be disturbed. Their views were received with active sympathy by the Governors and the medical and sanitary authorities.¹

The persistence by the Colonial Office in this policy was responsible for its negative attitude to all suggestions that came before it regarding the claims of the African doctors. When on 6 November, 1909, the Sierra Leone Weekly News in a leading article criticised the exclusion of African practitioners from the West African Medical Service, contested the position taken upon the question by the Departmental Committee of that year, and suggested competitive examinations as test of fitness for appointment,² A Fiddien minuted: "I do not

1. C.O. memo by A Fiddien 28 April 1913 *ibid*

2. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 6 Nov. 1909.

think it is necessary to comment in detail on this refreshingly outspoken article. There is no question that West African opinion is against admitting natives to the W.A.M.S...Whatever may be said in their favour as medical practitioners and men of scientific attainments, I should think that replacing a European M.O. by a native would almost certainly mean a setback to sanitation in the locality concerned..."

He did "not see any good grounds for reopening" the issue.¹ Although W.D.Ellis² was not convinced by the arguments and evidence before the W.A.M.S. for excluding "Natives permanently from the WAMS",³

Charles Strachey minuted: "The West African Medical Staff is primarily intended to look after the health of Europeans, who would not go to West Africans.... And it is useless to ignore the fact that by medical attendance they mean European medical attention...."⁴

1. Minute of 1 Dec. 1909 by A. Fiddian on the Sierra Leone Weekly News editorial on 'African Doctors' CO 267/520.

2. Ellis, Walter Devonshire, C.M.G. born 1871; son of Alexander Ellis. Educated at Winchester and New College Oxford (Scholar). 1st class Literae Humaniores, 1894; B.A. 1894; M.A. 1897; Entered Colonial Office, 1895; Principal Clerk, 1909; Asst. Sec. 1920; retired 1931; Lived in Devon; Died 10 Aug. 1957.

3. Minute of 1 Dec. 1909 by W.D.Elli CO 267/520

4. Minute of 2 Dec. 1909 by C.Strachey (in ibid.)

When in May 1912, the Society sent the Colonial Office, the views embodied in the report of the visit to West Africa, by Harris, which was to serve as a basis of discussion with Harcourt in the deputation which followed, a Colonial Office memorandum prepared for Harcourt on the occasion explained the adamant attitude he adopted at that meeting. According to Flood, "...The Society has been listening to the Gold Coast Leader.... The Government is systematically denounced because native doctors are not admitted to the W.A.M.S. and the denunciation is carried on in the same breadth with paragraphs about the 'mosquito trash', and violent attacks on the sanitary authorities. The only disabilities imposed on native medical men are that they are not eligible for appointment to the W.A.M.S., a service which is confined to doctors of pure European descent".¹

With the publication of Morel's leader which greatly activated the Colonial Office, the prevailing attitude had not changed but officials now tried to give a more reasoned argument for their

1. Memo of 1 May 1912 by Flood on The Report of the visit to West Africa by John Harris. AS and APS to CO, 1 May 1912. CO 554/10

views in conformity with the powerful case made by Morel.¹ Fiddian carefully refuted the points made by Morel one by one, in particular the argument that the African doctors were never guilty of professional incompetence. He pointed out that after having been interdicted Dr. Easmon was allowed to resign and died of alcoholism; that "Dr. Spillsburg" was a dispenser at £100 a year and therefore it was unlikely that he was a qualified medical man; that Dr. Randle was dismissed from the service; that Dr. O. Johnson, after five years' service, was unfavourably reported on, two years after he was refused a personal allowance on the ground of "insubordination

1. In the editorial of 28 March 1913, Morel had given details of Africans who had served in the medical service as doctors and wondered why the experiment was discontinued. According to him, Dr. Jarret became Asst. Colonial Surgeon at Sherbro and served for many years in that capacity; Dr. Easmon became PMO in the Gold Coast; Dr. King acted as Colonial Surgeon in Lagos. Dr. Smith was placed in charge of the hospital at Freetown and held the post until he died; Dr. Spillsburg was appointed to Gambia; Dr. Cole to the Gold Coast (both died on active service); Dr. Renner, who was then at Freetown, acted as PMO in S.L. on several occasions. Dr. Paris assisted Dr. Renner at Freetown and died at his post; Dr. Campbell was placed in charge of the lunatic asylum in Freetown. Dr. Randle, Dr. O. Johnson, Dr. Leigh-Dodiye, Dr. Sapara, etc. had served in Lagos.

and incompetency", and in 1897 he resigned. Morel had said that there were "black sheep" in every fold, both black and white. Fiddian concluded his minute with a racist note: "It is true that "black sheep" (an unfortunate metaphor) occur in every fold...; but if one has to select sheep from a new fold, one likes to have one's choice and only pick the white ones. This will be a very difficult thing to ensure, if there is to be any wholesale employment of native medical men. The Adeniyi Jones¹ case shows some of the risks of employing a low class practitioner".² Moreover Strachey at the same time expressed the view that with the increase of African population, the African medical man had a lucrative future. "The population of Nigeria alone is about 17 millions", he minuted, "and apart from questions of humanity, public spirit, local patriotism and scientific enthusiasm, practice among them should be lucrative... It is the obvious duty of the African to undertake medical work among their own people, and not to go about whining for jobs under government"³ Sir Frederick

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1. Dr. Crispin Curtin Adeniyi Jones (1876-1957) M.B.B.S. (Dunhelm); graduated 1901. Medical Practitioner, Lagos, Nigeria.
 2. Minute of 10 April 1913 by A.Fiddian on AM Editorial of 28 March 1913, CO 554/15.
 3. Minute of 11 April, 1913 by C.Strachey (on ibid)

Sir Frederick Lugard, who was on leave, clinched the argument, saying that it would be "indadvisable to introduce the educated native of the coast into the Northern Emirates, either as a Government official or as a private practitioner...."¹

Apart from the ugly circumstances which had earlier characterized public service in the Gold Coast,² the real source of official hostility towards the African doctors was the race prejudice which prevailed at the time. The prevalence of this phenomenon was the feature which had greatly "impressed" Harris and his wife when they visited West Africa. Harris had told the Committee of the Society that "the increase of race prejudice" was one of the features which had "forced itself upon us more than another in our journeys", regretting that if that race prejudice was allowed to grow, a very severe strain would "be placed upon the loyalty of the natives of West Africa".³

Although the Society was now concerned with this phenomenon, race prejudice was not

1. Minute of 25 April by Sir F. Lugard (ibid)

2. Vide David Kimple, op. cit. for discussion of the various cases of corruption in the Gold Coast public service.

3. Harris' Report to the Committee, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19. D5/1 also A.S.R. and AS, July 1912.

new in West Africa. As has already been indicated, one of the reasons ^{why} ~~by~~ Buxton's 'Appeal' met with spontaneous response in West Africa was the fact that the Africans were already frustrated with a colonial situation which used racist arguments to prove their inability to man responsible posts. There were some Africans like Henry Carr of Lagos, and J.C.Parkes of Sierra Leone, and others on the Gold Coast who had been elevated to responsible posts, but it was already clear that the Colonial Officials neither tried nor trusted other competent Africans. Even among those that were elevated, complaints soon began to show that there was discrimination against them.

In July 1899, James Johnson, who was to become the Assistant bishop in the diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, in an interview with R.L.Antrobus had urged the enlistment of native cooperation in working the machinery of Government. Later he suggested to Chamberlain that if an African had the requisite "intellectual capacity, a good character and general fitness", it was not justifiable to bar him from government appointments merely because of "race or colour".¹ F.G.A.Butler,

1. J. Johnson to Chamberlain, 27 Dec. 1899, CO 147/147

who minuted on this letter was of opinion that the experience with Africans in Government employment had been unsatisfactory: "When a first class native does appear, such as Mr. Ferguson of the Gold Coast, and Dr. Blyden and Mr. Carr of Lagos, he gets reasonable recognition, but our experience of natives in high position has not been of undiluted satisfaction. It would be impossible to explain this to Mr. Johnson, but I don't think his appeal on this score need cause so much searching of heart".¹ In 1909, Henry Carr himself told Colonel Seeley that the appointment of E.G. Rowden as Director of Education in Southern Nigeria over his head amounted to racial discrimination, against him. Although Seeley had told him "that, broadly speaking, this Office was opposed to the imposition of a colour bar", he also minuted: "I am aware that the colour bar does exist to some extent in West Africa... It may be that the prejudice is increasing, as Mr. Carr fears"² Charles Strachey, then a principal clerk, after explaining the special circumstances of Carr's

1. Minute by F.G.A. Butler, on J. Johnson to Chamberlain, 27 Dec. 1899, CO 147/146

2. Minute of 2 Dec. 1909 by Col. Seeley, CO520/87

case, minuted with regard to the general policy: "on the general question, it is necessary to recognise that the administration of the West African Colonies is British and that as long as this is the case no native African can expect (sic) to be appointed to any but subordinate posts".¹

Discrimination at administrative level, however, merely reflected the official antagonism towards the African educated classes. Harris had told his Committee that the attitude of the British officials, particularly young ones, towards Africans and British merchants had become very different from what it was a decade or two before. He had suggested to the Committee that the only remedy which he saw in improving that state of affairs was to give African and merchant communities who, as he said were "very important elements in our colonies", a greater share in the administration of these colonies.² When in May 1912, the Society sent to Harcourt the report of the visit to West Africa by Harris, in preparation for the interview of the 15th June, it therefore

1. Minute of 10 Dec. 1909 by Charles Strachey, CO 520/87

2. Harris' Report to the Committee, D5/1, also in ASR and AF, Af 1912.

urged among other things the desirability of giving the merchant and African communities a greater share in the government of the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria.¹

The Colonial Office viewed this suggestion

1. Harris to CO, 1 May 1912, CO 554/10.

Harris also urged the CO

(a) to consider the "financial position to which Prince Eleko and the white cap chiefs of Southern Nigeria have been reduced in consequence of the cession of Lagos to the Crown" (Actually this request was unnecessary because the Govt. had in that year increased Eleko's allowance from £250 to £300 p.a; and doubled the total paid to the other chiefs i.e. from £200 to £460 p.a.)

(b) the liberation of Bai Sheboro or Gbahah Louisy then in exile in the Gold Coast. (In his memo on this Flood said that there was no reason for reversing a decision based on the advice of the local authorities, and added that "Gbanah Lewis is very lucky in that there was not evidence enough to hang him".)

(c) that steps be taken to deal with questions arising from the relations between white men and coloured women (the Colonial Office was inclined to believe that the black women tended to blackmail white men.) In his memo on this Flood said "In Sierra Leone 'Women palavers' were a recognised source of revenue among natives and they are indignant at the partial suppression of the more outrageous form of this institution. Similar cases occur in the Gold Coast where natives sometimes set a concubine to seduce a white man with a view to blackmail".)

Memo of 1 May by J.E.W.Flood on AS and APS to CO 1 May 1912, CO 554/10.

with hostility. In his memorandum on this, Flood said that although in 1898 and 1911 there had been memorials from the Gold Coast asking for more representation in the Legislative Council, the Colonial Office had agreed with the then Gold Coast Governor that "no development had taken place in the educational standard of the natives or in their capacity for self-government such as might invalidate in any way, the grave objections to such a change". With reference to the memorial of 1911, he said, the Governor had told the Colonial Office that the signatories to it did not take enough interest in their own affairs to find out what was the composition of the existing Legislative and Executive Councils, and that three-quarters of the signatories could not write their names. Moreover he claimed that mercantile communities on the Gold Coast had given no complaints on the subject of representation. The memorandum continues:..."I don't think that the big trading firms would care to see their representatives engaging largely in local politics instead of attending to trade. In any case the mercantile community don't require the ASS to speak for them.

I very much doubt that the Society were asked to do so. It is also arguable whether the Constitution of the Colonies comes within the scope of the Society's work.....I have assumed that the Society don't ask for popular representation. The objections to that system in West Africa are so numerous that it is not necessary to state them. We don't want the local agitators sitting in our Councils...." Flood concluded by saying that the vast ~~a~~majority of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast were wholly uneducated; those few who were to some extent educated often had interests opposed to those of the bulk of their race; and, were apt to become "the tools of European speculators". He did not think it was "possible to give effective representation to natives". The Maltese and Cypriots were, he claimed, "infinitely better educated than the West African....yet their representatives imperfectly reflected the feelings of their constituents".¹

Lord Emmott, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, was of the opinion that "there is much force in some of the objections; but that which states

1. Memo. of 1 May by Flood on AS and APS to CO,
1 May 1912, CO 554/10

that it is difficult to choose native representatives who really represent the country they are chosen from is one constantly used nowadays with reference to our own M.Ps." He said that the chief objection against giving more representation on the Gold Coast was "that the merchant community don't ask for more representation and that so few of the natives are educated and when they are educated, are often declassés...¹

In his memorandum prepared on Southern Nigeria, Charles Strachey pointed out that the Colonial Office had "never, so far as can be ascertained, had any communication of any kind from Southern Nigeria suggesting an increase in the Council", and that it was difficult "to see who would be benefitted by our acting on the Society's recommendation". He believed, in other words, that Flood's minute on the Gold Coast applied mutatis mutandis to Southern Nigeria. Strachey was of the opinion that the merchants already had "a considerable voice in the Council", and that it was "by no means certain that they ought to have any more power over the administration" than they already had. He held the view that since they were the agents of

86. Minute of 13 May 1909 by Lord Emmott (ibid)

Manchester and Liverpool firms whose first duty was to their principals in England, they were unlikely to be "a tower of strength if advice were required on such subjects as education, 'concessions', missionary enterprise and agricultural or scientific work..."¹

With regard to the Africans, Strachey maintained the view "realised here for some time past" that "the educated native barrister at Lagos was just as much a "foreigner" to the Efik or Ibo people and chiefs of the Central and Eastern provinces as an Englishman was. According to him, the educated African talked a different language, and had nothing in common with the men in the interior except perhaps the colour of his skin. He pointed out that the problem was "how to get the un-Europeanised native represented", since he could not "be brought up to Lagos to sit at a table with gentlemen in frock coats", and, if he could, he would be too shy to talk". Strachey's solution was "to diminish" rather than "to extend the powers of the Lagos Legislative Council, and to continue the present policy of governing the protectorate through chiefs and the Native Councils

1. Minute of 9 May 1909 by Charles Strachey (ibid)

which have been established".¹ G.V.Fiddes, however sat on the fence. Since considerable changes might be involved, he minuted, "the matter must, therefore, be handled with caution."² Sir John Anderson, on the other hand, agreed with Strachey and opposed any extension of the representation: "the Lagos Lawyer is not a fit representative of the Protectorate native, and the mercantile agents are men of an inferior stamp who cannot be expected to take a broad view of things. The position in Africa is quite different from what it is in the East where the business of the European merchant firms is carried on by Europeans who are or are looking forward to becoming partners, and are men of education and standing."³ When on 5 June 1912, Harcourt received the society deputation his negative attitude to any idea of increased

1. Minute by Strachey 9 May 1909 on AS and APS to CO 1 May 1912, CO 554/10

2. Minute of 10 May 1909 by G.V.Fiddes (ibid)

3. Minute of 10 May 1909 by J.Anderson (ibid)

representation,¹ could therefore be understood in the light of the official views.

This failure by the Society to influence the Colonial Office towards increased representation for Africans and merchants in the West African colonies might have been unnoticed were it not for the fact that almost immediately, the extreme views expressed by Strachey in his minutes began to be applied in Nigeria. Before his arrival to effect the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, Lugard's activities; in particular, his punitive measures in Northern Nigeria, were already well-known to the Lagos elite. Thus while the Committee of the Society were congratulating him for his lack of colour prejudice,² a large number of educated Lagosians had already unfairly given him a bad reputation as a negrophobist.³

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1. Minutes, of Committee, ASS, 7 June 1912, item 2173
Buxton to Bannerman 10 June 1912.
 2. Minutes, Committee, 7 June 1912, Vol. VIII
 3. Lagos Weekly Record, 8 March 1913.

It was, however, the educated elements that Lugard was against, and not the whole race. As he told his wife, "his loud and arrogant conceit are distasteful to me, his lack of natural dignity, of courtesy antagonise me".¹ It seems more probable that it was their education, and not merely their social manners that Lugard disliked. Education gave them a liberal outlook to politics, which although it was not always shown in their own political relationships, nevertheless led to demands for more and more rights. This libertarian tendency was galling to Lugard's severely authoritarian and military mind; administrative changes were in fact aimed at crippling the aspirations and pretensions of the educated Africans of Lagos.

Lugard had incurred the justified suspicion of these Lagosians by his desire to reduce the status of Lagos by placing its Secretariat under that of the Government of Southern Nigeria,

1. Q. in Perham, Lugard, Vol. II p. 586

and then to confine the scope of the Legislative Council to Lagos alone, rather than to all Southern Nigeria as previously. Then he had hoped to remove the Capital of the amalgamated country to Kaduna, and to remove the provincial capital from the island to Yaba on the mainland of Lagos. The suspicions which greeted the mooted of these changes became a vigorous opposition when his plan for the Provincial System of Legal administration in Southern Nigeria became generally known. This system simply aimed at substituting the Northern Nigerian system of native justice dispensed by the District Commissioners for the common law system with the necessary right of appeal to the Nigerian Supreme Court which had existed in the South.¹

These schemes were actually intended to deal a great blow on the Lagos Lawyers whose

1. For the details of these plans see K. Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, (Cambridge, 1960); Perham, Lugard: Years of Authority, Vol. II (Collins, 1960).

manners 'antagonised' Lugard. Their opposition to the measures are therefore understandable. They had built up through the years a close connection and good legal practice with the interior and the new move threatened not only their economic prosperity but also their social and professional prestige with the interior Africans. Moreover, there was no mention of compensation for the lawyers to be affected, either in the form of appointing some of them as magistrates or in the nature of financial assistance to stave off the initial period of economic ruin. Apart from this legitimate self-interest, the lawyers had a genuine love for the Common Law and English system of justice. As J. Osho Davies later wrote to the Home Committee, British Justice was "the indestructible palladium of his (African's) liberty, his shelter and safeguard against the insolence of officialdom and his impregnable bulwark against patrician insolence".¹ Even as far away as

1. J. Osho Davies to Buxton, 20 Oct. 1914, MSS Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 236.

Calabar, there was sustained opposition to the new judicial arrangement. In a petition which crystallised the main elements of this opposition, the Calabar people expressed their preference for the existing machinery of Justice: "All sections of the community have a preference for British justice - appeal to the highest tribunal has ever been the privilege of even semi-civilized peoples...; if a plebiscite were taken, the whole country would be for the retention of the Supreme Courts".¹ There is no doubt that the Common Law gave the petitioners status as persons rather than as mere "natives",² but for those lawyers who were threatened with disastrous redundancy, these plans must have spelled literal ruin.

Since prominent members of the Lagos Auxiliary were lawyers,^a series of mass meetings were arranged by them, culminating in that of 3 February 1914 when

1. Calabar Petition to CO. 25 Oct. 1913 copy (in *ibid*)

2. Perham, Lugard Vol. II, p.589.

several resolutions condemning the changes were unanimously passed. A deputation of the Auxiliary saw Lugard who promised a possibility of amendments to this scheme.¹ This then encouraged the Auxiliary and other Lagos political groups to send letters to the parent Society which provided materials for questions in the Commons. A Committee meeting of 1 January 1915 considered "the recent reconstruction of the Courts of Southern Nigeria.....to be of a retrograde character and had caused grave local dissatisfaction";² yet its correspondence with the Colonial Office on the subject produced no change of policy. Although the agitation in Lagos was so serious that some members of the Auxiliary tried to launch a Nigerian Reform Association,³ Lugard, in spite of the disturbance this gave him, was prepared to defend the measure which, however, became law.

The disaffection of the Lagosians with some of Lugard's schemes did not, however, obliterate his popularity with the parent Society. Ever since

1. Lagos Standard, 28 March 1913

2. Minutes, Committee, ASS, 1 Jan 1915, E2/13, Vol. VIII.

3. See Perham, Lugard Vol. II, p. 590.

Goldie's proclamation against slavery on 19 June 1897,¹ the Anti-Slavery Society had always watched with growing interest and satisfaction the measures which Lugard adopted against the same evil in Northern Nigeria.² But the applause with which the Society received these activities was disturbed in 1906 by alarming information from a correspondent in Edinburgh alleging that slavery persisted in a big way in Southern Nigeria.³ When the Society enquired into this allegation it was mortified to discover

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1. Minutes, Committee, ASS, 2 April 1897, E2/11, Vol. VI
 7 May 1897 {ibid}
 Goldie to ASS, 30 July 1897 {ibid}
 2. Minutes, Committee, ASS, 4 July 1902, E2/12, Vo. VII
 Minutes, Committee, ASS 9 Nov. 1903, ibid
 Minutes, Committee, ASS 5 Feb. 1904 ibid
 Minutes, Committee, ASS, 4 Aug, 1905 ibid
 Minutes, Committee, ASS, 1 Feb. 1907 ibid
 See also Anti-Slavery Reporter, April 1904
 3. Minutes, Committee, ASS, 5 Oct. 1906, E2/12 Vol. VII
 See Lagos Weekly Record, 11 Aug. 1906.

that the particular circumstances ¹ alluded to were in fact given legal validity by a House Rule Ordinance passed by Sir Ralph Moor in 1901.²

The background to this Ordinance was the special circumstances which confronted Sir Ralph Moor when he proclaimed against slavery in the Niger Coast Protectorate. The old House Rule system

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1. It appears that in 1906 two slaves who had deserted their House in the central province of Nigeria, were arrested at Igbotu and taken to Warri for trial where one of them was imprisoned by the native authorities in the absence of the D.C. When Egerton heard of these proceedings, he instructed that the prisoner be released, and the untried man allowed to return to his house at Igbotu.
Egerton to Elgin, 7 Dec. 1906, CO 520/38.
T. Buxton to Elgin, 10 Oct. 1906, CO 520/38.
Lagos Weekly Record, 11 Aug. 1906.
The case of Eyitogoh (alias Jimmy Johnson) was another example. Eyitogoh was a slave who ran away from his owner in the central province of Nigeria in 1910, and was employed on a British steam-dredger in Lagos harbour. When one day his vessel came to the Central province where the House Rule Ordinance was operative, he was reclaimed by Chief Magbemi, the husband of his owner. Taken to Forcados, he was given twelve strokes of the cane by the order of the D.C.; and forced to enter into an agreement to pay his master 15/- per month for life from his monthly wage of £2. The ASS took strong exception to this transaction which was rightly stigmatised as 'a contract of slavery'.
J.H.Harris to Crewe, 20 Sept. 1910, CO 520/99.
Minutes, Committee, ASS, 7 Oct. 1910.
T. Buxton to Harcourt, 11 Jan. 1911, CO 520/110.
For the details of these cases see Tamuno, op. cit.
 2. No. 26 of 1901, CO 588/1.

which had guaranteed the economic existence and local government of the riverain states of Southern Nigeria stood the danger of being disorganised by the proclamation against slave-dealing.¹ With increased developments, Moor quickly discovered that he was faced with the problem of maintaining undisturbed the labour relations operative under the House Rule, and of keeping this labour supply stable after the abolition of slavery which had undermined the integrity of the House Rule structure. The House system had been a feature of Coastal towns, and had been reinforced by slavery, but Moor made the mistake of extending the scope of the Ordinance to inland towns where the system either did not exist or was not tolerated.²

Even before the harmful existence of this Ordinance was recognised, both the APS and the ASS had criticised the way and manner labour had been obtained and treated in West Africa. In April 1901, Fox Bourne had protested against the forcible compulsion of chiefs to supply labour, for military and civil work, railway construction and gold-mining

1. Moor to CO, 7 July 1901, CO 520/12

2. Moor to CO 28 May 1902, CO 520/14.

operations.¹ Persistent agitation by the APS and West African Governors against the recruitment of labour from one country to another, in particular to the Gold Coast mines, forced Chamberlain in 1901 to issue regulations against the emigration of labour from West African countries, in particular from the Sierra Leone protectorate.² The labour problem was accentuated, not only by the new economic developments which were taking place in West Africa, but also by the reluctance of Africans to be employed by Europeans in the mines,³ and as carriers during punitive expeditions and official tours. Africans persistently complained against the inhuman treatment they received at the mines,⁴ and "the iniquitous system" by which the Colonial officials deprived them of their earnings by alleging insubordination and

1. West African News, 3 April, 1901

2. See Lagos Weekly Record, 26 Oct. 1901 applauding Chamberlain's action.

3. African Times, 7 Dec. 1901

4. A. Renner to Harris, 14 Nov. 1910, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 244.

and dismissing them unremunerated before the end of a journey.¹

Allegations that Africans were forced to supply labour either through their chiefs or by rough Colonial officials were followed up by the humanitarians in parliament. On 30 March, Herbert Samuel drew the attention of the Commons to the proclamation issued in Southern Nigeria which empowered a Governor to order a chief to attend to the cleaning of any creek, and to call on the natives to do the work without any pay, while any man who refused to work was liable to imprisonment. He said that such a

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1. The Lagos Weekly Record of 26 Oct. 1901 describes the system then in vogue: ".... as a rule, the labourers engaged to accompany an officer or official on a journey to the interior seldom received any remuneration beyond the 3d. per day given him as subsistence money. After starting with a gang of carriers from Accra or Cape Coast, the officer invariably managed, after having travelled some 3 or 4 days, to find fault with and dispense with the services of his carriers who would be turned away without receiving any pay for the 3 or 4 days labour. He would then press a fresh gang of carriers into the service, and who in turn would be treated in the same way. And the process goes on until he reaches his destination, while the vouchers for the pay of the carriers employed would be duly filled up and forwarded to headquarters, but the money taken by the officer to be disbursed in respect to this particular account, never left the coffer in which it was deposited..."

system which amounted to forced labour or corvée, was undesirable in British Colonies, especially as it might be applied to the making of roads and railways and therefore produce social injustice of great magnitude.¹ On 5 November of the following year, Cathcart Wason had alleged that forced labour was imposed upon West Africans in lieu of the imposition of money rates. He had at the same time told the House that the incident culminating in the death of Crew Read² was attributable to unpaid demands for forced labour being insolently enforced by him.³

The amalgamated Society which never relented in its protests against these incidents, particularly

1. HC Debs. 4s Vol. 143 1905, 1770

2. This D.C. was killed by natives of Agbor in the Central province of Nigeria during a rising in 1906. This insurrection is ascribed to Crewe-Read's forcible requisitions for labour on a locality apparently hit by economic regress. But when he caused the old and venerable chief of Agbor to be flogged, while allowing, the police to loot the area, the entire population rose and in the turmoil that ensued, Crewe Read was killed. Although, he doubted whether the APS protest against the practice of forced labour, which it alleged had brought this about, was based on 'reliable information', O. Olivier yet minuted, "It is essential that roadmaking and other administrative zeal should not be allowed to go too far in its demands for forced labour..." APS to CO; 19 Sept. 1906, Minute of 20 Sept. by O. Olivier, CO 520/40

3. HC Debs. Vol. 143, 1906, 116-7

the decoying of West African labour to Fernando Po and the Portuguese Islands,¹ concentrated its attack on the House Rule Ordinance. The vigorous action which the Anti-Slavery Society had taken in regard to the Igbotu and Eyitoyoh cases was eclipsed by the view of the amalgamated Society that the general question of the operation of the Ordinance itself was an urgent one. After considering the evidence received, the Society in a letter to the Colonial Office stigmatised the Ordinance as upholding slavery and promised to furnish that Office, with reasons for its repeal.² The Colonial Office could not, however, accept the view that the enactment of 1901 was a revival of slavery. It told the Society that "the object in view was to provide a means of gradual transition from domestic slavery to a system of free labour", that it was a measure directed to the enforcement of the obligations, as well as the right, of a Head of a House, and that it abolished once and for all the difference in status between free-born members of a House and domestic slaves". There was, however, an encouraging adjunct

1. AS and APS to CO, 1 Sept. 1913, CO 96/540

2. Harris to Crew, 20 Sept. 1910, CO 520/99
T. Buxton to Harcourt, 11 Jan. 1911, CO 520/110

to the effect that Harcourt had ordered an enquiry into its working with a view to determining whether the time had come for a further advance in the same direction. But in considering the question, the Colonial Office, however always kept "in view the danger of undermining by a hasty measure the traditional authority of the Chiefs, on which the whole social and administrative system of the country is based".¹

Having learnt that Harcourt had enquired into the working of the Ordinance from the "man on the spot", Harris, therefore, suggested to Walter Egerton certain reforms which were most necessary if it was not intended to repeal it immediately. Harris pointed out that since the words "or in any other manner" which was used to define a "member of a House" appeared to leave the door open to purchase or transfer of the persons or slaves, and would justify any system of peonage which might develop, under it should be deleted. He contended that the time had come when "freedom of contract" should be extended to all adults without reference to any

1. CO to ASS and APS, 12 Dec. 1910, draft CO 520/95
CO to Egerton, 12 Dec. 1910 (ibid)

third party, arguing that the labour problems of the Colony would be facilitated by encouraging the individual to enter into labour engagements. He then contended that a clause should be inserted in a new Ordinance rendering illegal the separation of domestic slave families either on the death of their owner or at any other period, and that provision should be made whereby a slave might obtain his freedom, either by monetary or labour redemption. On the other hand, it was urged that the machinery of Government should no longer be used to force either men or women back to the control of their masters or "Heads of Houses". Moreover, since it was not always clear whether a man or woman could marry outside the limits of the House without their respective owners' consent, which might^{not} be given, Harris added that safeguards should be provided for liberty of marriage.¹ A few weeks afterwards, Harris, who was now in West Africa, wrote again to Egerton imploring him to use his influence to bring about his suggested reforms

1. Harris to Egerton, 28 April, 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19, D3/5 See also MSS Brit. Emp. S.22 G.224.

in order to render impossible a recurrence of incidents similar to Eyitoyah's.¹ But Egerton's confidence in the House system was not even undermined by the severity of the Ordinance which propped it up. "The House Rule", he wrote to Harris, "is only part of the native tribal system... Under that system the Head is a trustee for the "tribe" here more correctly described as "community"... All the property, land, etc. belong to the community and each member has a right to share in it. He also has certain obligations to his community... The System on the Gold Coast is very similar although different in details...." ²

It is clear from Egerton's reply that he was either confusing the House Rule Ordinance with the House Rule itself or deliberately watering down even the moderate demands made by Harris. But these advocated reforms, were for other reasons unacceptable as well to many members of the Society, in particular, Herbert Tugwell. Tugwell who had canvassed the case against the Liquor traffic,

1. Harris to Egerton, 4 May 1911 (ibid)

2. Egerton to Harris, 5 May 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19, D4/1, also in MSS Brit. Emp. S.22 G.224.

brought the same zeal to the question of slavery in Southern Nigeria. He could not regard the reforms demanded by Harris as constituting a solution to the problem. Arguing the case for immediate repeal, Tugwell told the Society that as long as the Ordinance stood unrepealed, the system of providing "forced labour" through the medium of the Chiefs would continue. Moreover, he claimed that this injustice would extend to other places since the operation of the Ordinance which was in earlier years confined to the Delta of the Niger and its immediate neighbourhood, had begun to extend into the interior to include such districts as Onitsha. He argued that the Ordinance operated against the interests of Education since Chiefs were able to forbid children from attending schools even though their parents might desire them to do so. Boys who had been trained by individual missionaries as Pupil teachers were liable to be recalled by the Chief of the House apart from any wish of the parents in the matter, he alleged.¹

On the other hand, Tugwell told the Society

1. Tugwell to T. Buxton, 7 June 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. 22. G. 224.

that under the Ordinance chiefs who lived with the people in isolated plantations were practically a law unto themselves. No person could leave those plantations without the knowledge and consent of the Chiefs. Tugwell cited a place like Opobo, where he said, the people lived on islands under most degrading conditions huddled together in huts which stood on swampy lands; although better sites were available close by on the main land, Tugwell alleged the Chiefs refused to allow them to move since this would involve the loss of many slaves. He, therefore, made an economic case against the system under which progress on the part of the people was practically impossible. A man could not accumulate capital without arousing the suspicions of his Chief; he could not trade on his own account; he traded in the interests of the House. Tugwell argued that this hindered rather than encouraged the development of trade. He concluded by advising that it was strategically wise and expedient to repeal the Ordinance. He claimed that such a procedure would neither lead to any unrest since the people knew already that the day of its abolition was up and the young men had prayed that that day might speedily come, nor restrict

commercial prosperity in the area, since the "merchants who have urged me to take action in the matter assure me that the House system seriously interferes with trade...."¹

In the Committee itself, opinions were now divided; but the two policies - immediate reform but ultimate repeal and immediate repeal - were reconciled by a sub-committee² which recommended to the Committee that the British Government should be asked to repeal the Ordinance, and that the reforms suggested by Harris should be immediately pressed for as leading up to, and not a substitute for, the abolition of the Ordinance.³ However, Harris who was in Southern Nigeria at this time organising the Lagos Auxiliary, had sent a report to the Committee in which he described the operation of the Ordinance in the Eastern province of Nigeria. He contended that the Ordinance which tended to force British labour to flee the

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1. Tugwell to T.Buxton, 7 June 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. 22 G.224.
 2. This sub-committee consisted of Sir C. Scott Moncrieff, Rev. R.C.Gillie, M.J.Elliot, F.W.Fox, Mrs. Solomon and Mrs. Unwin. Minutes, Committee, AS and APS, 2 June, 1911, E2/12, Vol. VII
 3. Minutes, Committee, AS and APS, 12 June 1911, *ibid.*

the colony was economically unsound, and that it was derogatory to the British Crown that in order to enjoy personal freedom British subjects of good character were compelled to seek their liberty under Spanish and other flags.¹

The Society published this report in a pamphlet form² and a memorial based on it was sent to Harcourt. Citing the case of Eyitoyoh and Jabez Linette as illustrative of the baleful operation of the Ordinance, the Society had come to the conclusion that the Ordinance was accompanied by such undoubted features of slavery as the loss of personal liberty and the denial of freedom of contract, separation of families, restriction on marriage and forced labour through the medium of the chiefs. It advised Harcourt to accept the points of reforms advocated by Harris since to uphold and sanction a revival of

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1. Harris to Buxton, 6 May 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 19 D5/1 also S. 22 G. 224. Harris reported the case of Jabez Linett, a slave who escaped from Calabar to Fernando Po because he was required to give service to his master whom he regarded as wicked. For details of this episode, See Tamuno, *op. cit.*
 2. Domestic Slavery in Southern Nigeria. (1911) Minutes, Committee, ASS 7 July 1911, item 1938 E2/12, Vol. VII.

domestic slavery was an attitude entirely counter to the British traditions. Such an attitude must be repudiated root and branch by public opinion.¹

Meanwhile members of the Parliamentary Committee had been asking questions in the Commons. On 13 February 1911, Joseph King and Josiah Wedgwood wanted facts from Harcourt on the operations of the Ordinance, Joseph King insisting on knowing whether under the Ordinance it was possible to separate (against their will) husband and wife who had been married under Christian rites. Harcourt's denials were ineffective since it is obvious that he was not in possession of the facts. Two days after, the same King took him to task on the details of the arrest of "Joe of Lagos", another deserter from a House in Warri.²

Since Harcourt had told the House, in reply to a

1. ASS to CO. 11 July 1911, CO 520/110

2. HC Debs. 5s Vol. XXI, 1911, 670-1, 1037
King, Joseph, eldest son of Joseph King, M.R.C.S. of Liverpool; born 31 March, 1863, Educ. at Uppingham School, Trinity Coll. Oxford Giessen and Berlin Univs; Liberal M.P. N. Somerset 1910-18; Clubs: Reform, National Trade Union; Died 25 Aug. 1943.
Byles, Wir William Pollard, Kt. Born 9 Feb. 1849; son of William Byles, founder of Bradford Observer. Educated in private schools; M.P. Yorkshire (Shipley Div) 1892-95. Radical M.P. for N. Salford since 1906. A strong Radical and Social Reformer. Belonged to the National Liberal and Reform Clubs. Died 15 Oct. 1917.

question by King, that the status of slavery was not recognised in Southern Nigeria, Sir William Byles, some weeks after, referred Parliament to the report by Harris which had been published and other letters written from Southern Nigeria. Byles alleged that even the officers who administered the law did not approve of the things they did. According to him, a young man who went ~~out~~ as a District Commissioner after a short experience in Southern Nigeria wrote home: "People in England would be horrified if they knew the decisions which are given in these courts".¹

Pressure from Parliament and the Society forced Harcourt to order another investigation into the working of the Ordinance.² He had told Parliament that it "had worked on the whole fairly well", but that it was "not one which ought to be maintained".³

1. HC Debs. 5s Vol. XXVIII, 1911, 1312-13.

2. In April of that year he had been told by Egerton that the investigations of the DCs showed that the allegations made against the operation of the Ordinance were "unfounded" Egerton to Harcourt, 20 April, 1911, CO 520/102

3. HC Debs. 5s. Vol. XXVIII, 1911, 1347.

When a few days later the Society was informed that the Colonial Office was enquiring into the operation of the Ordinance,¹ it at once recommended its immediate repeal, bringing to the fore all the extremist arguments hitherto advanced by Tugwell. Tugwell like Egerton, had argued as if the House Rule system was a result of the Ordinance under criticism.²

The Colonial Office now pointed out to the Society, that House Rule was the basis of the Social organisation of the area before the Ordinance was passed; that it was in force in the districts to which the Ordinance did not apply, and would remain even after the Ordinance was abolished. It at the same time pointed out that the system in its original form presented certain very undesirable features, and that the Ordinance under attack even removed some of the least desirable of these features; for example, that it rendered unlawful the former practice of recruiting households by the purchase of slaves, abolished in the sight of the law the distinction of classes by

1. CO to ASS, 23 July 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. D2/2

2. For these arguments see also the Times, 24 July, 1911.

which a social grade of domestic slaves was recognised, and set up a very important safeguard against oppression by requiring that all proceedings for the enforcement of the rights of the Head of a House should be instituted before a European officer, instead of in the native courts, in which the influence of the ruling class was necessarily predominant. The Colonial Office, however, believed that the Secretary of State would determine how far the traditional system of the country might with safety be further modified in the direction of individual liberty; but it added that, to establish by law complete individual liberty in Eastern and Central Nigeria would be in existing circumstances a complete social revolution which would only court failure and probably disaster.¹

Although Morel and Holt seemed to agree with these views,² it was clear that that office did

1. CO to ASS, 12 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S 19, D2/2

2. Morel, Nigeria, op. cit. pp. 62-3.
 Holt to Morel, 22 May 1911, F8/4. EDMP
 Morel was of the view that "to destroy the authority of the heads (of Houses) would be to create an army of wastrels and ne'er-do-wells. Native Society would fall to pieces and endless 'punitive expeditions' would be the result..." Nigeria, p. 63
 For a similar attitude see, R.E. Dennett in Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute, Sept. 1911.

not always bring out the evils in the system of House Rule since the Ordinance was passed. From other reports, the House System seemed to have been more oppressive since 1901 than previously.¹ Moreover, letters from missionaries on the subject indicated that while for generations the House System was the custom in the greater part of the Niger Delta districts, the Government in 1901 legislated as if the custom were universal in the Eastern and Central provinces, and thus made a distinctly local custom apply to the whole country.² Moreover, if Tugwell is to be believed, "it would not be difficult to prove that the practice of 'recruiting households by the purchase of slaves' persisted: Girls were still purchased in the Ibo markets, nominally as wives, but actually as slaves, Tugwell alleged."³

Fortunately for the Society the reports from local officials were this time very critical of the administration of the Ordinance in Eastern and

1. Rev. George Basden to T. Buxton, 10 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22 G. 224

2. ASS to CO; 18 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19. D6/1; also S. 22. G. 224.

3. Tugwell to Buxton, 22 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 224.

Central provinces where it was said to be "lax". Moreover, the Ordinance had been applied to areas outside its legitimate coastal scope, and had not even improved the relations between the so-called "free-born" and "servile" members which it was alleged was one of its merits.¹ Although certain chiefs in the Niger Delta wanted the Ordinance to remain,² Harcourt was thoroughly shocked by these reports: "I am amazed to find that we have a condition existing in Southern Nigeria so little removed from slavery not only under our flag but under the authority of our own Ordinance. It is quite clear that the House Rule Ordinance is valued and maintained by the Government officials there mainly as a thinly veiled system of forced labour which enables them to obtain portorage and canoe haulage free of cost and probably other services besides. The native chiefs naturally support it for the considerable advantages which it gives to them."³ A few months after, therefore, the Ordinance

1. Egerton to Harcourt, 19 Oct. 1911, CO 520/107

2. Encl. I (a) and Appendix I: Petition dated 4 April and 27 July, 1911, in *ibid.*

3. Minute of 31 Dec. 1911 by L. Harcourt on Egerton to Harcourt, 19 Oct. 1911, CO 520/107.

was amended¹ in the light of this high-powered criticism.

This amendment, however, did not satisfy the Society which wanted total repeal. Egged on by Tugwell, who had earlier given the hint that the Colonial Office did not contemplate abolition of the Ordinance, but a modification of "the traditional system",² the Society began to collect more facts on the operation of the Ordinance and to send deputations to officials. The subject once again came up in Parliament. On 27 June 1912, Harcourt told a Committee of the Commons, that he had "examined the matter very carefully, and I am by no means satisfied with the existing situation". He could not however tell whether it would be "possible eventually to abolish this system altogether", though it could be confined to a restricted coastal strip. He had asked Lugard to report

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1. For the amended House Rule Ordinance No. 1 of 1912 dated 8 Feb. 1912 see CO 588/4
 2. Tugwell to Buxton, 22 Aug. 1911, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G. 244; also Mss. Brit. Emp. S.19. D2/2

specially to him.¹ However, at an interview with Lugard before he went out to Nigeria, Travers Buxton and Harris had told him the Society's yearning that the Ordinance be repealed.² Lugard had promised that he would look into the question when he reached Nigeria.³ By December 1913, the Society was jubilant over rumours which were later confirmed, that the "Native House Rule Ordinance" of 1901. and the Amended Ordinance of 1912 would be repealed from the 1st January 1915.⁴

This successful agitation against the House Rule Ordinance represented the climax of integrated effort.

1. HC Debs. 5s Vol. XL 1912, 535

2. Buxton to A. MacCallum, M.P., 21 June 1912 Copy S.19. D1/11 also in MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.224.

3. Lugard to Buxton, 11 May 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 224. also S.19. D2/3

4. Buxton to Harcourt, 1 Dec. 1913, Copy MSS. Brit. Emp. 22. G. 224.
CO to Buxton, 6 Dec. 1913, ibid;
Minutes, Committee, ASS, 2 Jan. 1914, E2/13,
Vol. VIII.

within the Society. Prior to amalgamation the two societies had protested respectively against rudiments of slavery and incidence of forced labour. Under new conditions, of which the House Rule Ordinance was a mere reflection, it had become clear that old-world slavery was indistinguishable from new forms, and this discovery gave the amalgamated Society a greater unity of purpose. This crusade against slavery supplemented the anti-liquor cry, and by crystallising the most provocative elements of humanitarian ethics, helped to justify the existence of the Society. It demonstrated that the Colonial Office was not always totally indisposed to take into account the traditional efforts of Exeter Hall to provide colonial rule with a humanitarian conscience. It provided the Society with another justification for its vigorous and efficient organisation since amalgamation, and a source of self-congratulation in face of other failures.

The Society was, therefore, prone to revel in the after-glow of this triumph. Yet with very special exceptions, the results of other combined efforts by the parent Society and its Auxiliaries could only be described in negative terms. They

failed to carry the repeal of the notorious Infectious Diseases Ordinance of 1908, invoked in the Gold Coast in May 1911 as quarantine measures were adopted to check the outbreak of Yellow Fever, but which led to the indiscriminate demolition of African houses without apparent cause or reason, while inadequate provision for the life and property of the evicted had been made.¹ They failed after sustained efforts to convince the Colonial Office to repeal the 'savage' Sedition and Prisoners' Deportations Ordinances which had been passed in Nigeria to check press criticism of the Government and to discipline disobedient chiefs.² The pathetic petition of the Ekitis against a merger which subjected half of their kinsfolk (Yoruba) to barbarous treatments from their "ancient enemies" (the Ilorin Fulani), in spite of

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1. Ordinance No. 2 of 1908.
 See Petition of the Gold Coast Auxiliary to Harcourt, 12 June 1911. Also
 V.J.Buckle to Travers Buxton, 13 June 1911
 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.210
 CO to Buxton, 15 June, 1911 *ibid*
 W.C.F.Roberts to Bannerman, 29 Dec. 1911 *ibid*
 H.Bryan to Bannerman 22 Feb. 1912 (copy) *ibid*
 2. HC Debs. 5s Vol. XV 1910; 1935-6; Vol. XVI, 1910, 3

the efforts of the Society in Parliament, failed to achieve more ~~an~~ ^{than} an unctious assurance from the British Resident at Ilorin.¹ Moreover, the unhappy experience of Ifawibe who had been installed by the Owa of Ijeshaland to be the Onibon of Ibon, but was illegally deposed by his enemies at the instigation of Captain Blair, the irascible British Resident at

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1. See Petition of the Ilofffa (of Ekiti), 25 Feb. 1911 to the Sec. of State Copy MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22 G. 215
 Petition of the Chiefs and Elders of Ekiti, 24 July 1911, to the Sec. of State. Copy (in *ibid*) African Mail 28 April 1911
HC Debs. 5s Vol. XXIV, 1911 1359-1360
 Minutes Committee, ASS, 6 Oct. 1911, E2/12, Vol. VII
 Lloyd Harrison to Buxton, 20 Sept. 1911 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.215
 Lloyd Harrison to Buxton 9 Oct. 1911 (*ibid*)
 Buxton to J. Bright Davies, 13 Oct. 1911 (*ibid*)
 Buxton to Lloyd Harrison, 20 Oct. 1911 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.215
Lagos Weekly Record, 2 Dec. 1911
 Lloyd Harrison to Buxton 7 Feb. 1912 S.22. G.215

Ilesha,¹ echoed in the Commons,² but was not rescued from the facetious comic it degenerated into.³

1. Lloyd Harrison summarised the position in a letter of 29 May 1912 to T. Buxton: "It is the same thing again; although the Owa is recognised as the Ruler of Ijeshaland, the Commissioner sent to his country for the bare purpose of advising him, must needs thwart and set aside his actions and ways in what does not in any way concern him, and when the Owa and his Chiefs complain, the Government must back up their man at any cost..." MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G. 217
2. HC Debs. 5s. Vol. XLII, 1912, 22-3
Previously the Society had caused a question to be put in the Commons asking the Sec. of State "whether his attention has been called to the dispute which arose in Southern Nigeria over the appointment of one Ifawibe to be Chief or Onibon of Ibon, who was in 1909 elected by the authority of Owa and Council of Ilesha, but his appointment having been opposed by the Chief and people of Ibokun, he was forced to leave the country and make representations to the Governor of Lagos; whether, and on what grounds the District Commissioner supported the Chief of Ibokun in his hostile attitude and in 1911 refused the Onibon any assistance to return to the Chiefdom of Ibon to which he was appointed by the Owa and Council, according to the authority conferred upon them by law for the internal administration of the district".
See MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 217
3. For the severe measures against Onibon (one of which even refused his request to enter Ibon to bury his dead mother). See
Onibon's petition to Harcourt, 24 Oct. 1911 Copy
MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.217
J. Bright Davies to Buxton, 13 Jan. 1912 (ibid)
Resolution of the Lagos Auxiliary of 13 Jan. 1912 (ibid)
Lloyd Harrison to Buxton, 29 May, 1912 (ibid)
The official view was that Ifawibe had no right to the chieftainship he claimed; it would seem, however, that he was merely a victim of Captain Blair's high-handed meddling with the internal admin. of Ilesha.

Protests against the deportation of some individual chiefs met with limited success, but other issues involving personalities met with less enthusiasm and failed perhaps more ignominiously. When Mike Peters-Osoko¹ appealed to the Society against a high-handed dismissal by Adegboyega Edun from his judicial service in the Egba United Government, it pleaded non possumus: the Society lacked the courage to interfere in the affairs of a Native 'Independent' Government.² Madame Adeline, head of a 'House' at Calabar, who had suffered great economic and inhuman treatment and false imprisonment through the excessive zeal of the D.C.

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1. Mike Peters-Osoko was in the service of the Egba United Govt. as Political Officer at Iro from April 1907 to 19 August 1909 when his appointment was terminated at the instigation of A. Edun, the Secretary of the E.U.G., owing, as alleged to "the people and chiefs of Iro refusing to have him as Political Officer". But Peters-Osoko claimed that his discharge was aimed at forestalling charges of bribery and corruption which he intended to make against some members of the E.U.G., including Edun himself. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.216.
 2. Wheeler to Peters-Osoko, 27 March, 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.216.
Buxton to Messrs Taylor & Co. 11 July, 1912 (ibid)

C. W. Partridge,¹ even till 1920 found the Society "unable to carry the matter any further".² Circumstances of venality and gross malversation of funds might rightly have inhibited the Society from urging the reinstatement

1. It appears that Adeline of Duke Town, Calabar and her husband Plange, had complained to the Govt. of Southern Nigeria of the capture and enslavement of certain members of Adeline's household by the Aros at Itu. When in 1905 she wanted to recapture them, her rights over them were denied by the slaves who apparently had pledged loyalty to another House. The Govt. made enquiries but could not go further in the matter. When Adeline attempted to pursue it further she was arrested with her husband in 1905 and imprisoned for six months because, according to Partridge, she was trying to subvert the House Rule Ordinance. When in 1906 they were released they were forbidden for a time to proceed to Calabar with the result that Adeline's goods and trade were ruined. She then petitioned the Colonial Office which although it found "that Adeline 'Warri' has a grievance against the Government", felt that her petition was involved and by no means clear".
H.P.Plange to CO, 31 Dec. 1905, CO 520/34
Minute of 3 Feb. 1906 by J.R.W.R.
J. Bright Davies to Buxton, 16 Oct. 1912. For her case see MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G. 211.
2. Adeline to Buxton and Harris, 24 Feb. 1920 MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G.211.
Buxton and Harris to Adeline, 29 March 1920.
(There is no evidence, however, that the Society did anything at all about this matter. There is no comment on it in the ASR and AF, and was not mentioned in the minutes of Committee meetings as having been discussed. Adeline had asked for compensation; but the Society probably regarded her as a slave dealer)

of Philip Coker of Lagos to his former office,¹ but even a prolonged protest might never have been more rewarding. Although the return of Nana of the Benin River from his exile² and the release of the Oloye of Oye from his illegal arrest in July 1910 by the same

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1. Philip Coker was a native Accountant of Lagos who had been sentenced in Jan. 1910 to 9 months' imprisonment on a charge of stealing. He had however been released in June of the same year, apparently on the ground of a wrongful conviction but really because he had worked up a large section of Lagos population to petition on his behalf. But he was refused a free pardon and reinstatement in Govt. service. The Lagos Auxiliary forwarded a resolution of its sub-committee urging that the Society should see to it that Coker was re-habilitated. It appears however, that several members of the Lagos Auxiliary believed that Coker was actually a rogue, and had opposed the resolution. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.225
See Minutes, Committee, ASS 3 Nov. 1911, E2/12, Vol. VII.
HC Debs. 5s Vol. XXXVIII, 1912 Sir Wm. Byles, 1737-8
 2. Minutes, Sub-Committee, ASS, 3 Oct. 1913, E2/13, Vol. VIII.

Captain Blair,¹ owed much to the Society, it was unsuccessful to secure the return of Ovarrepi of Benin,² Chief Okun³ and Gbanah Louisy of Sierra

1. It appears that on 25 March 1910, a Govt. messenger brought before the D.C. Capt. Blair a man arrested near Oye for illegal rubber tapping. He had caught another man, but as he was unable to bring that one with him, he sent the 2nd man to the Oloye, and asked the latter to send the prisoner to the D.C. at Oke Imo (i.e. Imo Hills). The Oloye is reported to have failed to do this, although he came to the place himself when sent for. He was told that he would have to remain at the town of Ilesha until he produced the man. This, he did on 19 April, and was allowed to leave; The Society had written the CO and asked questions in Parliament about this native Chief.
Minutes, Committee, ASS, 3 June, 1910, E2/12, Vol. VII
HC Debs. 5s Vol. XVII, 1910, Cathcart Wason, 1016
HC Debs. 5s Vol. XIX, 1910, J.King; Col. Seeley, 2341, 2342.
2. Minutes, sun-Committee, ASS, 7 Nov. 1913, E2/13,
" " " Vol. VIII
" " " 2 Jan. 1914, (ibid)
3. Chief Okun from the eastern border of the Western province of Nigeria, was deported on July 5 1911 to Calabar for not co-operating with the D.C. Tabor in the latter's demand for native labour. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.218.
J. Bright Davies to Buxton, 30 Nov. 1911 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22 G.218
Buxton to Bright Davies, 1 Dec. 1911 ibid
Buxton to Byles, 7 Dec. 1911, 11 Dec. 1911 Ibid
Harcourt to Byles, 13 Dec. 1911 copy ibid
Buxton to J. Bright Davies, 21 Dec. 1911 ibid
Minutes of Committee ASS, 5 Jan. 1912 item 2116,
E2/13, Vol. VIII
cf with the case of the Akenigbo of Ijebu Remo who was arrested and later released at this time. Vide Lagos Weekly Record, 16 Dec. 1912

Leone¹ from their exiles. In its genuine fight against racial discrimination which was sweeping across West Africa, the Society succeeded in keeping the issue of employing more educated Africans in administrative positions before the public gaze; but, as we have seen, it did not succeed with the Colonial Office to remove the disability suffered by African medical men. Its most signal victory was, of course, when it secured the abolition of the House Rule Ordinance; but even here the role of Lord Lugard should never be minimised.

In 1917, A.P. Newton ascribed no wholesome influence to the mid-Victorian humanitarians when he wrote:.....

The wire-pulling Influence of the philanthropists of Exeter Hall over the British Government in the middle Victorian period led the Colonial Office into many unfortunate mistakes, and its indulgence in much uninformed interference with local administrations as regards the negro imbued the white colonists with that contempt and dislike for 'Downing Street' that made them regard it as characterized mainly by meddlesome ineptitude and pharisaical fussiness about matters it neither troubled to examine nor understand...." 2

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1. ASS to CO 1 May 1912, CO 554/10; Memo of 1 May 1912 by Flood.
 2. A.P. Newton, Old Empire and the New, (London and Toronto, 1917) p. 100.

It is probable that awareness of these alleged mistakes might have inhibited the Colonial Office from officially associating itself with schemes, however, humanitarian, which Exeter Hall advocated during the period under study. But in curbing the direct influence of the Society on official policy the Colonial Office at the same time could not have inoculated itself against other wholesome, though indirect, results of humanitarian pressure. Through incessant questions in parliament, by persistent correspondence, memorials and personal relations with the Colonial Office and its officials, the Society probably exerted an intangible influence on policy. The Colonial Office began to anticipate the reactions of pressure-groups to circumstances and in thus modifying official policy in a way that would make humanitarian protests innocuous, it gradually and imperceptibly took on a disposition which was to provide colonial rule with a humanitarian conscience. Yet in unfairly dismissing much of the Society's advocacy as uninformed, confused or exaggerated, the Colonial Office not only determined that rather than share power with an extraneous body like the Society, it would confide in the 'man on the spot' who, except

with rare lapses, that Office believed, reflected the benign and paternal intentions of the British Government to its West African wards.

As will be seen in the next chapter, the relationship between the parent Society and its West African allies was not always smooth-sailing. During the controversial land debate, when it was misled by the Auxiliaries, the Society adopted a line of action which nearly led to a policy harmful to its more numerous wards, but not before internal reflections, and the persistent advocacy of Morel for protection of land by the Crown forced the Society to modify its philanthropic lessons. In the event, the 'Coast' elite virtually lost confidence in the Home Committee. In Lagos internal dissensions led to a schism and dissolution of the Auxiliary until it was salvaged again. In the Gold Coast, the land controversy provided most prominent members of the Auxiliary (who like other auxiliaries had found Section 2, Par.5

of the Auxiliary Constitution most embarrassing)¹
with an excuse to decamp into more vigorous, and
perhaps more opportunistic movements.² The Sierra
Leone Auxiliary, as already indicated, existed even

1. The controversial par. 5 of the Auxiliary Constitution which was, however, later amended, after colonial protests, reads as follows: "In order to secure harmonious action, the Society shall not take any public or official action locally as an Auxiliary to or under the auspices or authority of the Society in England without first consulting the Committee of the said Society, but this regulation is not intended to prevent the Committee of the Auxiliary (acting in its own name and in its own authority) from placing before the local authorities, or otherwise dealing with cases of emergency where prompt action is considered necessary by the majority of the Auxiliary Committee provided that that Committee makes it quite clear (when emergencies do arise) that their independent action is being taken upon the sole responsibility of the Auxiliary and that it in no way commits the Parent Body". (See MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 210, 230, 245.)

The implication of this is obvious, and the effects, in spite of later amendments, far-reaching: people began to feel that the Auxiliary was a powerless organisation; and many members were gradually disillusioned and resigned.

2. The Gold Coast ARPS and the Native Conservation Society told their supporters that the Auxiliary had no independent existence and was therefore of no account in Gold Coast issues.

more precariously. Its faith in the parent Society was never totally undermined, but its failure with the Committee to have the Colonial Office repeal the oppressive Human Leopard and Alligator Society (Amendment) Ordinance disheartened its rank and file.¹

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1. Ordinances 5 of 1895 and 9 of 1896 amended in 1911 to checked increased incidence of murders and cannibalism connected with these Societies in the Imperri area of Sierra Leone. For early history of the Societies Vide C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone (Oxford 1962) p. 545. Also 'Notes on the objects and proceedings of the Society which is purely a murder Society' in W.B.Griffith to CO 5 June, 1913, CO 267/555. For the harsh operation of this Ordinance and fruitless efforts to repeal it, see Harris to Buxton, 13 Jan.1911 MSS.Brit. Emp. S.19 D5/1
 Roberts to Buxton, 12 Nov. 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 245
 Minutes, Committee, ASS, 14 Nov. 1912 E2/113, Vol. VIII.
 Buxton to Harcourt, 12 Dec. 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19. D1/12
 CO to Buxton, 30 Dec. 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19 D2/3
 Roberts to Buxton, 14 Jan. 1913. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 245
 ASS to Emmott, 10 Jan. 1913. Copy ibid
 Harris to Roberts, 3 Feb.1913 Copy ibid
 Minutes, Committee, ASS, 7 Feb.1913, E2/13, Vol. VIII.
 CO to Buxton, 19 Feb. 1913. MSS Brit. Emp. S.22, G. 245
 The Society's contention was that the retrospective powers of the Ordinance would oppress people who were perhaps members of the Society but had since led a respectful life. But the CO could "scarcely imagine that they want murderers to get off on the ground that the murder was an old one..."
 Minute of 12 Feb. 1913 on AS and APS to CO 11 Feb. 1913, CO 267/555

In spite of the rare sacrifice of members, like G.M.Domingo, who even came to Britain to rouse the Home Committee to more fruitful pursuits,¹ the Sierra Leone Auxiliary was destined to a half-forgotten memory.²

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1. G.M.Domingo, 'a native merchant of Bompehtoke, Sheingay, in the Headquarters District and a man of influence', had urged the Sierra Leone Auxiliary to do its best to get revoked the expulsion order by the Governor against Chief Bunting Williams and others who were tried and acquitted on a charge of cannibalism. Domingo then left for England to see the Home Committee. See Also
 Roberts to Buxton, 29 July 1913, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22
 G. 245
 Minutes, sub-Committee, ASS, 3rd Jan.1913, E2/13,
 Vol. VIV
 " " " 7 Feb. 1913 ibid.
 Victor Buxton, on his way to Sierra Leone was asked by the Home Society to help bring the Auxiliary to more active life.
 2. When the present writer visited Sierra Leone in April 1965, he was at pains in reminding C.D. Hotobah-During (who was a foundation member) of the Sierra Leone Auxiliary. When During remembered at last what it was all about, he remarked trivially: "Oh! that thing we did when we were young."

CHAPTER V.

THE WEST AFRICAN LAND QUESTION AND NATIVE POLITY.

The land question in West Africa can only be understood in relation to the nature of the same question in the Britain of the time, in particular, the extraordinary idealism which had preceded and inspired it. Apart from Imperialism, another deep but general current which had swept through Britain was the socialist or social-reforming demand for a crusade against poverty. This partly took the form of a revolt which appeared in trade-union struggles and the birth of a political Labour movement; but it was also reflected in a corresponding progression of ideas. These ideas, to a great extent, derived from Henry George.¹

Henry George was an American land reformer whose book Progress and Poverty, published in America in 1879, and which appeared in a cheap English edition at the end of 1881, denounced land monopoly.² The arrival of this book was opportune enough since the land question, which was one

1. A.C.K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914 (Oxford, 1936) p. 334.

2. Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the cause of Industrial depression and of increase of want with increase of wealth - The Remedy, (1899; 1881), passim.

of the main roots of Ireland's troubles, was increasingly coming to the fore in British politics. The monopolistic grip of a few thousand landowners was regarded by their opponents as a great impediment to social and political progress. It was estimated that about one-fifth of the total area of Great Britain was the property of only 600 nobles, and about a half was owned by not more than 7,400 other individuals.¹ There was already a steady movement of population from the countryside to the towns, and the agricultural crisis which began in the mid-1870's was swelling this exodus. People who were alienated from the soil became an enthusiastic audience for prophets who told them that their fate was due to private monopoly of what should be the heritage of all. The greatest of these prophets was Henry George.

George was said to be "essentially a good, earnest, simple man, possessed of no profundity of thought, but with a delightful character, who was wholly unspoiled by his phenomenal literary success, and believed that he was working as effectively as he certainly was honestly for

1. T.H.S. Escott, England, Its People, Polity and Pursuits (London, 1879) Vol. I, P. 327.

the benefit of his fellow-men"¹ When he came to Britain on an organised lecture-tour in 1884, he attracted great audiences, but it also gave him an opportunity to see for himself what a burning issue the land problem had become in British politics. Speaking to his audience at Bridgeton, he chastised the anomalous condition of the British Society while prophesying the inevitable doom of landlordism:

"So monstrous is the present condition of Society, so utterly unnatural is the wrong that disinherits men, that makes the great majority of people in a country like this utterly landless-men really without a country, without any legal rights to the use of one square inch of that element without which men can neither work nor live - so utterly unnatural, so utterly monstrous, so utterly opposed to all clear thought, to all human perceptions of divine truth, is it, that it cannot endure when it is fairly arraigned - No one can travel through this country, no one can read the newspapers, without seeing that the Land Question is in discussion, that it is in reality the burning question of the time; and when the land question is discussed the days of landlordism are numbered."

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1. H.M. Hyndman, in Henry George and H.M. Hyndman: The Single-Tax versus Social-Democracy: Which will most benefit the People: Verbatim Report of the Debate in St. James's Hall, 2nd July 1889 between Henry George and H.M. Hyndman, (Reprinted, 1906) p. 4.
 2. Henry George, The 'Single-Tax' Faith: An Address by Henry George in Temperance Institute, Bridgeton under the auspices of the Land Restoration League (Bridgeton Branch Wed. 3rd May 1889. (R. M'ghee Tanaghmore, Lurgan, C.1890) p. 9.

This theme was seized upon by his adherents, among them, Grant Allen, who painted a pathetic, almost mournful picture of the lot of the young landless Briton of the time:

".... The young citizen finds himself from the outset turned loose upon a world where almost every natural energy, and almost every kind of raw material, has been already appropriated and monopolised beforehand by a small and unhappy compact class of squatters and tabooers. Not one solitary square inch of English soil remains unclaimed on which he can legally lay his head, without paying tax and toll to somebody, in other words, without giving a part of his labour, or the product of his labour, to one of the squatting and tabooing class, in exchange for their permission (which they can withhold if they choose) merely to go on existing upon the ground which was originally common to all alike, and has been unjustly seized upon (through what particular process matters little) by the ancestors or predecessors of the present monopolists. He cannot sleep without paying rent for the ground he sleeps on. He cannot labour without buying the raw material of his craft, directly or indirectly, from the lords of the soil, the encroachers on the native common rights of everybody. He cannot make anything of wood or stone: for the wood and the stone are already fully appropriated; he cannot eat the fruits of the earth, for the earth itself, and all that grows upon it, is somebody else's. The very air, the water, and the sunlight are only his in the public highway: nay more, even there, for a single day alone. His one right, recognised by the law, is the right to walk along the highway till he reels with fatigue - for he must "keep moving": and then he is liable, if he sleeps or faints in the open, to be brought up before the magistrates charged with heinous crime and misdemeanour of being a vagabond, without visible means of support, who has paid no rent to the lords of the soil for a square yard of room on which to

die comfortably "¹

To end this "monstrous" anomaly, Henry George advocated the "single tax" formula. He thought that this method would make it easy to sweep away all private ownership of land, and convert all occupiers into tenants of the State, by appropriating rent. Moreover he felt that this formula admitted of no complicated laws and cumbersome machinery. "Do that, and without any infringement of the just rights of property, the land would become virtually the people's. What under this system was paid as rent by the tenant would be taken by the State. The occupiers of land would come to be nominally the owners, though, in reality, they would be the tenants of the whole people...." He saw the civilization that would arise out of this as that which God had ordained before mankind subverted it, for "the Creator provided that the natural advance of mankind shall be an advance toward a social State in which not even the weakest need be crowded to the wall, in which even for the unfortunate and the cripple there may be ample provision." He concluded that "this

1. Grant Allen, Individualism and Socialism (Reprinted from Contemporary Review, May 1889. 1903) pp. 5-6.

revenue, which arises from the common property, which represents not the creation of value by the individual, but the creation by the community as a whole, which increases just as society develops, affords a common fund, which, properly used, tends constantly to equalise conditions, to open the largest opportunities for all, and to utterly banish want or the fear of want...."¹

Although some critics described Henry George as superficial,² others saw his doctrine as "consistent with the highest state of civilization", and in "perfect harmony with the moral law."³

These land ideas, of which Henry George's formula was merely an aspect, were not a novelty in British politico-economic thought. Denunciation of the great landed estates had been a Radical tradition. Earlier in the nineteenth century, Ricardo had formulated a theory of ground rent according to which it increased automatically without any expenditure of labour whereas wages always remained at the same level, and profits continually diminished

1. Henry George, Land and People, p. 14

2. H.M. Hyndman, Debate op. cit. p. 4.

3. Herbert Spencer, Social Statistics, Chap. X, Section 8.

He, therefore, concluded that he saw no reason why the capitalist and the worker, comrades in adversity, should not combine to tax the landlord for the benefit of society as a whole. His disciple, James Mill, had pushed the suggestion a little further, and John Stuart Mill, further still, until the idea culminated in George's radical solution of the social problem by liberating the capitalist and the labourer at the same time.¹

If George's formula made a stir in the England of his day, its influence is clearly discernible even in the period this study is concerned with. One of the staunchest adherents to the 'Georgian' economics was Josiah Clement Wedgewood. A Quaker and a teetotaler, he had begun his parliamentary career as a Liberal and later joined the Labour Party, but he was essentially independent. By nature, he was an individualist rather than a partyman. His perennial principle was hatred of oppression. He lacked the qualities and possessed the failings which make for a career within the frame-work of party politics. Putting justice and the integrity of the individual above other things, Wedgewood saw politics not as the art of the

1. Elie Halevy, The Rule of Democracy, p. 295.

possible, but as an opportunity to achieve worthy ideals. If a thing seemed right to him, he did it, the expediency of it notwithstanding.¹

These qualities apart, it was his views on the Land question which brought him very close to Moral. Wedgewood subscribed throughout his life to one political and economic doctrine - the Taxation of land values as advocated by Henry George. In 1909, he had become the President of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values and toured the British countryside, making eloquent speeches in a bid to gain adherents to his economic creed. As with Henry George, against whom the men of property had organised a "Liberty and Property Defence League" with the slogan "Individualism versus Socialism", Wedgewood found immense opposition from the landed interests and in particular the Conservative hierarchy². Within the Liberal fold, however, the ideas of Henry George gained sympathisers.

In 1909, Lloyd George adopted the slogan of denouncing landlords as a political move to save the

1. C.V. Wedgewood, The Last of The Radicals, Josiah Wedgewood M.P. (Oxford, 1951). passim.

2. Ibid, Pp. 83-84.

declining fortunes of the Liberal Party.¹ Having seen that the land was a popular cry in the country, he summoned the rest of the nation to revolt against the monopoly of the landowners. The new chorus was reminiscent of the almost lachrymose tenor of Henry George and Grant Allen a quarter of a century before: "In the large towns and in the mining areas the landlord became wealthy without any action on his part at the cost of the workers and as a result of their work. In the mines the capitalist risked his capital, the miner only his life. The landlord was certain to gain. In the towns, all who needed land for factory, shop or lodging, were his victims." When he brought his budget measures in the same year, Lloyd George began to apply the principles of land tax. The first of his three new taxes, the unearned increment value tax, was a tax of 20 per cent on an increase in the value of land, to be ascertained every time it changed hands. The second, the determination of lease tax, was a tax of 10 per cent on the increased value of property let out on lease, calculated at the renewal of the lease. And the third, the undeveloped land and ungotten minerals tax, was roughly a tax of a half-penny in the pound on the

1. Rt. Hon. L.S. Amery, My Political Life, Vol. I. England Before the Storm, 1896-1,14, Pp. 340-43.

value of land which its owner did not cultivate or subsoil whose mineral wealth he did not exploit. These taxes were, however, not onerous; but they could be increased until, in the course of time, they might produce a revolutionary effect.¹

This short-lived inroad of Henry George's ideas into the realm of government policy might never have given his ideas their due importance in British thought were it not for two other factors closely related. The first was the corresponding idealism which found its maturity in the Socialist movement; and the other, the transportation of the modified and unmodified teachings of Henry George to West Africa, where the great "natural harmonies" of Progress and Poverty would have full scope.

Although the Radical tradition in Britain had always associated itself with social improvements, it seems most probable that the Socialist reformism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries started directly from Progress and Poverty.² In this connection, however, it must be emphasised that Henry George himself was not a Socialist. He even

1. Halevy, op. cit., Pp. 294-5.

2. R.C.K. Ensor, England, p. 334.

quarrelled with some Socialists who wanted to use his attack on the land-lords to attack other means of capitalist production. He was a defender of private property and enterprise, and always emphasized the differences between his group of "Single Tax Men", and the Socialists;

"We differ from Socialists in this important particular, we do not believe that it is necessary to construct any complex scheme to right the wrongs of Society. We do not think it necessary to create any great machine. What we believe is alone necessary is to abolish restriction - to give free play to natural harmonies; we see that what is needed to abolish poverty is not charity but justice. What we aim to give is freedom."¹

Again, on the relationship between capital and labour, Henry George was most emphatic:

"We differ from the Socialists of all grades by attaching far less importance than they do to capital. We recognise the fact that the two primary factors of all production are land and labour. We deny as utterly absurd the declaration made by a certain school of political economists whom the Socialists have copied, that Labour cannot be employed until capital is accumulated. We say that it is labour that produces capital. We say that when, in any productive occupation an employer employs men, and pays them wages, that he is not advancing capital to them, but they are advancing capital to him."²

George's renunciation of Socialism might have been expedient, but it was ultimately unavailing. His

1. Henry George, The 'Single-Tax' Faith, p. 6.

2. Ibid, Pp. 6-7.

catch-word, "unearned increment" (which must be seized by the State) much more than Marx's "surplus value" tended to fashion the thinking of the Socialist movement in England.¹ Henry George, therefore, "acted quite unconsciously as a valuable propagandist for ideas almost entirely in opposition to his own."² He contributed in undermining the doctrines of laissez-faire, itself, and, therefore paradoxically helped to launch Socialism, by also hammering with immense vitality and conviction the creed that poverty could be eradicated by political action.³ However, although his ideas were indirectly forming the English Socialist movement, the direct influence of Henry George seems to have declined, since Lloyd George applied it to resuscitate declining Liberal fortunes. It had become clear to level-headed men that the problems of a highly industrialized country such as Britain could not be solved by eliminating only one form of monopoly.

But Radicalism has always been a profession unintimidated by popular denunciation; for indeed, many

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1. Ensor, op. cit. P. 334. The first work seemed to be the Fabian Essays whose 7 authors were Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, (afterwards Lord Passfield) Sidney (afterwards Lord) Olivier, Graham Wallas, Hubert Bland, William Clarke, and Mrs. Annie Besant.
 2. In Henry George and H.M. Hyndman, op. cit., p. 4.
 3. Keith Hutchinson, The Decline and Fall of British Capitalism (Oxford, 1951) Pp. 32-34.

radicals even tend to lose interest in a winning cause which seems no longer to need them. Moreover, failure to convince the majority, to the radical, does not foreshadow the fatuity of his premise. At times, he is even undemocratic in ideas because the real essence of Radicalism is that the opinion of the multitude is not the standard of rectitude. And if the radical creed is not acceptable in one part of the globe, that is no reason why an attempt should not be made elsewhere, particularly in the Colonies. Indeed, "no sincere Radical, then or later failed to appreciate that the Colonies provided him with a field for social and political experiment, with a proving-ground for his theories, which could be put into practice in an atmosphere unpoisoned by such baleful and reactionary traditions as tempered all reform in England itself

Since Britain did not clearly respond to their doctrines on land, they felt that the Colonial Empire might provide a better ground to test the theories of this "Georgian" radicalism. Hence in alliance with others, Morel and Wedgewood advocated land reforms in West Africa. This advocacy was timely since it synchronized with the intentions of the Colonial Officials in Nigeria to put the land administration and policy in Northern Nigeria on a permanent basis. The Northern Nigeria Land Committee, of which Wedgewood served as a member, produced a report which, although it escaped being brought under the principles of economic rent advocated by Henry George, stated the two cardinal principles of public ownership

1. A.P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and its Enemies (London, 1959) p. 12.

Native Security.¹ Almost immediately after, another movement, led by Morel and supported by Wedgewood and other Liberal and Labour parliamentarians, sought to introduce the principles, though not the form, of the Northern Nigerian Land Law to other West African Colonies. This led to a welter of educated African and chiefly opposition, but which could not prevent the movement from pushing its arguments far enough to impell the Colonial Office to appoint a Commissioner to report on the situation in the Gold Coast, and later a West African Lands Committee with Morel and Wedgewood among its members.

Morel's attachment to the economic ideas of Henry George was acknowledged, in particular when he tried to convince Sir William Lever to adopt an enlightened commercial policy in Africa.² While explaining that Mary Kingsley had greatly influenced and inspired him, Morel also claimed that it was Henry George's advocacy that shaped his land views. It was a principle, he said, "advocated by Henry George for humanity at large," and in "so far

1. Compare the accurate view of W.K. Hancock: Problems of Economic Policy, 1918-1939, Pt. 2, op. cit., Pp. 186-7 with the erroneous one by C.V. Wedgewood, op. cit., p. 81.

2. See Chap. VI.

as it is concerned with practical politics in West Africa - it is based, first upon acknowledged fact, secondly upon convictions arising out of acknowledged fact and study of conditions." What he concluded was the best policy arising out of this study of the West African conditions was to "root" the people in the land and to guarantee this land to the African through a legislative process. He made this point clear in the same letter to Lever,

"I can best describe that policy as one aiming at the economic development of West Africa by the people of the land: rooting the people in the land: assisting them by technical and labour-saving appliances to develop the land and its resources for the benefits of themselves and their descendants. That policy entails the fundamental administrative and legislative basis that the land of West Africa belongs to the people of West Africa whose trustees we are, they being our wards"¹

It is, therefore, clear that Morel's first premise was a recognition of the importance of the land to the African Social, political and economic life. He emphasised this point almost to a degree of dogmatism:

"No problem connected with tropical African Administration has been more neglected and has given rise to more miscalculations and mistakes than the land problem, and this notwithstanding the fact - that an intelligent land policy is the indispensable groundwork of administrative success - meaning by that expression prosperity and internal peace. Failure to grasp that elemental fact is characteristic of the superficiality with which the civilized Powers have, generally speaking, treated the entire problem which lies before them in the African tropics and sub-tropics - the Land question in

1. Morel to Sir William Lever, 19 April, 1911.

British West Africa is in a hopelessly confused state; a tangled skein which will take a great deal of unravelling¹

Morel thus found it impossible to separate the land question in West Africa from the question of administration and treat it as something special and apart for, as he put it, "our entire administration from top to bottom must, in the ultimate resort, be directed in accordance with the views we take of the future role of the native in West African economy, and consequently of the Land question"²

When, therefore, he observed that the West African was threatened by new and alien forces which undermined his land rights, Morel warned the Colonial Office "to be on its guard against a recrudescence in various quarters of attempts to influence West African legislation affecting economic development in the direction of introducing European Systems of labour and industrial expansion." He broadly hinted, with more suspicion than certainty, that "not a few Europeans filling various positions in the West Africa are thoroughly hostile to the whole idea of economic development by the Negro as independent land-owner and producer in his own right." Concluding that a preservation of the dignity of man could be the only justification of British rule, he urged the Colonial Office to set its face "like flint against the

1. African Mail, 17 Sept. 1909.

2. African Mail, 11 Feb. 1910.

tendency to rush things in West Africa and the introduction, with that intent, of artificial, alien systems which can never lead to permanent healthy growth, can never lead to that improvement, maturing and unfolding of the native races which we publicly profess are the objects of our efforts, and which alone justify our presence in their country and our interference in their affairs"¹

Morel, as may be expected, never failed to justify his philosophy on both ethical and economic grounds. For if, indeed, the morality and utility of a measure must be considered, it was obviously immoral to adopt measures calculated to place the economic development of the natural wealth of an aboriginal people in the hands of an alien people, for this must rob them of the full advantages they can derive from the economic development of such natural resources. It was at the same time, "unscientific to suppose that the economic power of a man can be greater under conditions which reduce him to the position of tenant and hired workman...." Morel, rather, saw the true end of British policy as a strange, but compatible, compound of altruism and utilitarianism, for, as he said, Britain could have "business relations with the Africans, and even make a profit out of him without robbing him, that we can govern him without stealing either his land or his property."

1. African Mail, 5 March 1909.

He supported this legitimate business relationship since he saw it as "the bulwark of the native and the security for decent administration against the slave-driver."¹

Having indicated what the true policy ought to be, Morel then considered the means for achieving that end. He contrasted three alternatives. The first was the preservation of native customary land law; improvement and maintenance of the natural lines of development; and the conservation and vitalising of "African nationalism."² The second was the gradual elimination of native customary law in favour of European law; the successive modification of native tenure towards individual ownership with its implications; rejection of the principle of development along indigenous lines and of the principle of "African Nationalism." The third was what appeared to him to be the present policy of drift and shift. He was particularly opposed to this because it might result in "an impasse of contradictions and incompatibilities," leading to a disintegration of the native society without any compensating constructive alternative. The second alternative he also opposed for it would create "a collection

1. African Mail, 11 Feb. 1910.

2. By this Morel means African traditional institutions.

of units devoid of structural instincts and incapable of national growth" He favoured the policy of preserving native customary land in land since in it was "embodied above all else the economic independence and security of the African."¹

The report of the Northern Nigeria Land Committee which had established, among other things³, that land was inalienable according to native traditional tenure, provided Morel with a springboard for action. He wanted legislation to embody this work of research, believing that no such legislation had previously barred illegal alienations of land in the Empire. This wish for legislation was expressed in terms which now exonerated the Colonial Officials he had once condemned:

"It would appear therefore that the policy of the Colonial Office and of the local authorities has been inspired by the wish to maintain, in effect, native customary law, and not to eliminate or undermine it; but that this policy has not, hitherto, become embodied in any legislative act giving it force of law."²

1. African Mail, 11 Feb. 1910.

2. African Mail, 18 Feb. 1910.

Although he was aware that elaborate legal codes had in other countries not prevented spoliation on ^acomprehensive and wholesale scale, Morel, on the other hand, must have realised that such codes might provide a basis for the intervention of humanitarians or interested persons to save the aggrieved society.¹ He, therefore, felt that the time had come when, "if we are satisfied that the preservation of native customary law as to land is the indispensable foundation of good government in the regions of Africa we cannot colonise but can only supervise ... we must seriously consider the necessity, not at some remote period, but now, of arming our policy against every kind of encroachment "2

These views were not very much at variance with those of John Holt. Holt's evidence to the Northern Nigeria Land Committee, indicates his dual position as a trader and a humanitarian. As a trader, Holt would not be

1. The Berlin Act, though in many senses little more than "a scrap of paper" was nevertheless the basis for British Intervention in the affairs of the Congo. Vide K.B. Keith, The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act (Oxford, 1919), also S.J.S. Cooley, Great Britain and the Congo Thesis op. cit., Abstract.

2. African Mail, 18 Feb. 1910.

expected to injure his own interests merely to achieve theoretical ideals. He wanted the government to make land grants for trading and agricultural purposes on a broad basis, on terms not too onerous because the conditions of trading in West Africa in those days were always uncertain and apt to be risky. Government policy, he emphasised, must be based on impartial grounds, for no group of traders should pretend to do more public service than another. Moreover, it must be pursued along scientific lines so as to attract capital and develop the country.¹

As a merchant, Holt would have preferred land in Nigeria to be held freehold, on the same terms as his Company had secured in German, French, Spanish and Portuguese possessions in West Africa. But because he felt that this might be abused by unscrupulous people, he stood in favour "of the Government having control of the land" since he did "not want to see a number of men getting into Nigeria for the purpose of holding land in order to speculate with it or for merely company-promoting purposes "2 Although he had suspected that the Government itself might

1. Holt to Antrobus, 11 Nov. 1907, Copy, Box 9/7, J.H.P.

2. Holt's precis of Evidence.

take on the position of a monopolistic holder exacting onerous terms, Holt nevertheless "would like the Government to keep control, but give liberal terms to those who will actually make use of it." He declared in a tone reminiscent of the 'Georgian' influence:

"It is land-grabbing for speculative purposes that can be so largely abused and requires to be carefully guarded against; the man who will use the land anywhere without injustice to the native communities ought to be encouraged in every way."¹

Holt's evidence was tempered by that common sense, but humanitarian, instincts which always tended to vanquish his hated economic motives. He made a great impression on the Land Committee. In a conversation with Morel, Wedgewood expressed his regards for Holt; and, as is to be expected, Morel quickly informed Holt of this appreciation:

"I was teaing with Wedgewood on the terrace of the House of Commons; he said you were different to any merchant he had ever met, or heard of, and if he

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1. Northern Nigeria Lands Committee: Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Cd. 5103 (1910). Also Report of the Northern Nigeria Lands Committee, and Despatches Relating thereto, Cd. 5102 (1910) Para. 58.

could place the economic development of Africa in your hands, he would not trouble about the Native Question..¹

As has been indicated, when the Northern Nigeria Land Report was concluded, Morel and Holt pressed that it should be given a legal basis. Morel saw the land settlement as "that protectorate's safeguard against future demands which it is easy to foresee will follow the completion of the railway."² For his part, Holt wished that their friend Charles Strachey "would get on with the Land Ordinance, " for, as he said, it was "about the most important thing they have yet tackled."³ And when Morel gathered from Lord Crewe's despatch to Sir Hesketh Bell that ^{the} legislation required, to give effect to the decision of the Committee would be submitted to the Secretary of State before being given the force of law in the Protectorate,⁴ he wrote a very long and detailed letter to Lord Crewe, giving his suggestions before such an eventuality.⁵

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1. Morel to Holt, 6 July 1910. 18/7, J.H.P.
 2. AM, 5 March, 1909, also Morel, Nigeria, op. cit. p. 143.
 3. Holt to Morel, 9 Jan. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.
 4. Crewe to Hesketh Bell, 22 March 1910, Encl IV in Cd. 5102.
 5. Morel to Crewe, April 1910, copy. F. 9. EDMP.

The main purport of the intended Proclamation was that the whole of the land of the Protectorate should be declared to be "under the control and subject to the disposition of the Government;" and that this control should be exercised "with due regard to lawful customs."¹ Against this, Morel submitted that the latter provision was largely a matter of interpretation on the part of the local Resident advising the High Commissioner; that questions of expediency or definite tendencies might arise, under certain circumstances, operating either in Northern Nigeria or in Britain, which would further accentuate its debatable character. He felt that without any definition of the word "Government", "the aims which His Majesty's Government have in view, may, in practice, be imperilled."²

Morel did not dispute the fact that conquest had invested the British Government with overlordship, the supreme control of the country having passed into the direct hands of the conqueror. But "that the Paramount Power has shifted would not naturally imply, in the minds of the people, that the new Government interpreted its rights of

1. Cd. 5102.

2. Morel to Crewe, April 1910, copy F. 9. EDMP.

conquest otherwise than conferring upon it the same obligations of trusteeship towards the people for the land." He rightly held that "any suspicion attributing to the British Government control over the land in a sense differentiating from trusteeship might well give rise to deplorable consequences, especially if used to his or their own ends by certain reactionary influences to which a period of famine, failure of crops, cattle-disease or other visitations would provide his or their opportunity..."¹

It was, however, the ghost of the Congo State which always haunted Morel, for what lack of definition had produced in the one might be avoided in the other by definition. Thus he pointed out to Lord Crewe that the evils of the Congo had found their "legislative origin" in a policy which treated all land as belonging to the "State", and "the negotiable products of the land and demesnial fruits"... as the property of the "State". The word "State" was never defined, and in practice, the "State" became the Administration of King Leopold. Although he knew that the motives and aims of the British authorities in intending to declare the land of Northern

1. Morel to Crewe, April, 1910, F.9, EDMP.

Nigeria to be under the control and at the disposal of the Government were "diametrically opposed to the motive and aims animating the present European rulers of the Congo, yet in the absence of any definition in the proposed proclamation of the word "Government" or "State", it would be a difficult task publicly to explain that the policy of H.M. Government is not virtually identical with the policy of the Belgian Government!" in claiming to be the owner of the land of the Congo. Morel was, of course, aware that the position of the Congo was internationally different from that of Northern Nigeria, nevertheless, he believed that "the upholders of the present system on the Continent could hardly fail to take full advantages, in a diplomatic and international sense, of the outward similarity between the declared land policy of the H.M. Government in Northern Nigeria and their own..."¹ This state of affairs might embarrass the British Government, but "from the point of view of the public treatment of the question on the part of those who for many years have fought for the sanctity, on the Congo,

1. Ibid. Already some people had started to point out that there was no difference between both systems. For example, Sir Thomas Barran, M.P., had, in a reply to Morel's memo, said he could not understand the difference between the systems in Northern Nigeria and the Congo. Sir Thomas Barran to Morel, 25 May 1912, F.9/A-B.

of the very principles which it is the object of H.M. Government to promote in West Africa, the embarrassment would be a very real one"¹

The Congo experience apart, the circumstances of the Nigerian political arrangement and its inevitable social effects demanded definition. Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria was by now merely a matter of time, and in the absence of ~~a~~ definitive land legislation in Southern Nigeria, Morel advocated that the principles of the Northern Nigeria Committee might be a model for the whole country when amalgamation took place. He feared that in the absence of a definition of what "Government" and "State" meant, many educated natives of the South, "Some of whom are possessed of considerable influence with the Native Chiefs of the hinterland," would cause unrest, especially in the Western Province, where the special treaties with Abeokuta and Ibadan, were, in fact producing a very confusing land situation. He warned that "correspondence will certainly ensue between the educated element in Lagos, and a certain Society in this country"² and

1. Morel to Crewe, April 1910; copy F. 9. EDMP.

2. Refers to the AS and APS; and further illustrates Morel's attitude to the Society.

opportunities will occur in the House of Commons for persons not thoroughly acquainted with these questions, to represent the policy of H.M. Government in Nigeria in anything but a satisfactory light"¹

Morel then went into fanciful definitions² out

1. Morel to Crewe, April 1910. copy F. 9.

- 2.(1) 'Government' 'defined as Imperial Govt., acting as supreme protecting power in Nigeria represented by the Nigerian Administration administering the state of Nigeria!
- (2) 'Nigerian Administration' - 'defined as being constituted by the Governor and his Council, acting in conjunction with the recognised Native Chiefs and their Councils.'
- (3) 'The State of Nigeria' - 'defined as constituted by the aboriginal inhabitants of Nigeria, administered through their chiefs and Council under the supreme control and protection of the Govt.'
- (4) 'National' - 'defined as pertaining to the State of Nigeria.'
- (5) 'Native and Natives' - 'defined as descriptive of the aboriginal inhabitants who under their chiefs and Councils, constitute the citizens of the State of Nigeria under the Supreme control and protection of the Govt.'

of which land emerged as "National Land", held in trust and controlled by the Government in the interests of the State, control being exercised in accordance with established native law and custom, with the primary object of securing the undisturbed occupation, enjoyment and use of the land for the present and future generations of natives. Morel declared:

"The only rampart which is capable of defending the latter policy and of preserving Western-Central Africa, primarily as a Black-man's country where the native shall have the opportunity of expanding along his natural lines and of conserving his economic independence, is legislation which shall place the African's right in his land upon a foundation of permanent security."¹

When Holt saw this correspondence, he encouraged Morel to continue to "be alert and jealous for the rights of the Natives under British rule." While wishing that Lord Crewe might be influenced by Morel's counsel in all West African affairs, he equated a British Imperial trusteeship with justice:

"Our responsibilities to the natives under our rule are very great, and if we are to enjoy God's² blessing as a nation we must be just to them ..."

In the event, Morel's letter was decisive. It contributed not a little in drawing up the legislation for Northern

1. Morel to Crewe, April 1910, Copy. F. 9. EDMP.
2. Holt to Morel, April, 1910, EDMP.

Nigeria which embodied the principles recommended by the Lands Committee, but ^{whose?} which phraseology was greatly determined by Morel's suggestions. He explained this achievement to Holt:

"(At my) urgent request, the Colonial Office agreed to call all the lands "native lands", which means perhaps more than appears on the surface."¹

That the phrase "native lands" was included in the draft legislation, apart from Girouard's role, was due to Morel's membership in a small Committee which finally decided upon it, and to the humane devotion of Charles Strachey to him - an "earnest, right-thinking man, absolutely on our lines, and a man too of great influence, but swamped with over-work."²

Once the land question in Northern Nigeria was settled, Morel's attention immediately went to the South where the land problem was more confused. It has been shown by authorities on land tenure that under native law and custom land was also inalienable and burdened in Southern Nigeria.³ The Chiefs and their Councillors held

1. Morel to Holt, 1 July 1910, 18/7, JHP.

2. Ibid.

3. R.E. Dennett, in Journal of the African Society Vol. IX No. XXXIV Jan. 1910.
The well-known works of Elias and Meek also support this view.

the land in trusteeship for the people. Sale of the land was a crime against the native State, and private property in land was therefore contrary to strict native customary law. However, largely through the influence of the educated native class, forms and procedure of English law progressively began to creep inland from Lagos, Native customary law began to be gradually undermined; land was being bought and sold in defiance of such law, the chiefs being either unwilling or unable to prevent it. The result was the formation of "a class of irresponsible land-owners, paying no tribute to the original owners," due to the presence of the British in the country, and contact with British ideas, laws and education¹. Morel sensed the danger that was imminent:

"The land which is now being acquired by individual native owners, will eventually pass out of their hands into the hands of European or European-cum-native Company promoters and financiers, and the economic security of the Yoruba native will have passed away never to return As the Westernized native is undermining the Society from which he sprung, through the modernising tendency, or rather the Europeanizing tendencies he has acquired, so will the European financier buy out the Westernized native. It is merely a matter of time. Once insert the thin edge of the wedge and the final result is certain."²

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~~ALL~~ illustration of what Morel was trying to

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1. AM 11 Feb. 1910. AM. 18 Feb. 1910.
 2. AM 18 Feb. 1910.

guard against was, infact, taking place in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria, particularly at Abeokuta. In January 1910, it was announced that the Alake and Council, in the course of one of the Council's meetings, admitted that land was being privately sold for debt, and that the practice should not be interfered with, provided that land did not change hands with natives who were non-Egbas.¹ Morel aptly compared the Alake with King Canute: "They dig the grave of their own authority, and the authority of their successor." The process of disintegration which the Alake had unwittingly sanctioned could not be easily checked; "between the private selling of land between Egbas and the selling of land between Egbas and non-Egbas", there was only one step which could be crossed at any time, if not already. Morel, therefore, concluded that the principle of preserving the inalienability of land in order "to save the native States from the short-sighted policy of their rulers would seem to be the obvious duty of the Power which protests them"² Morel continued in the same article:

1. Nigerian Chronicle, 7 Jan. 1910.

2. AM., 18 Feb. 1910.

"... the true policy of the British Government and its representatives on the spot is to place the inalienability of the land upon the surest foundations, throughout Nigeria, as the cardinal principle of administration, embodied in law, upon the basis, as to authority, of supreme trusteeship for the native people, and as to motive that the land represents for all time the capital of the whole people - This policy would work out in its practical application through the Chiefs and their councils as trustees for the respective communities owing allegiance to them, brought together more efficaciously than at present by the institution of Provincial Councils and guaranteed in a certain revenue from the rents accruing from the land"¹

Apart from the establishment of these Provincial Councils,² he advocated the extension of the powers of the Supreme Court over the protected States as a way of resolving the confused land situation. A third alternative, which he wanted to apply to the Western province, was a restoration of the ancient hegemony of the Yoruba States under the Alafin of Oyo, "as the surest method of reconstructing Yoruba 'Nationalism' upon a proper basis." Morel wanted the Alafin of Oyo converted "to the necessity

1. AM. 18 Feb. 1910.

2. In fact, the idea of Provincial Councils was already opposed by natives and APS as an erosion of the 'independence' of the native States and a breach of treaty obligations with natives. See Chap. III for reference.

of working hand in hand with the British authorities to prevent the break-up of native customary law as to land.¹ It did not occur to Morel that it was no longer a practical proposition to reduce the various Yoruba chieftains to a feudal acknowledgement of the Alafin's authority. This centralised authority had in fact been challenged in a process of nineteenth century civil wars, leaving the Alafin's central position more of a tribal myth than an economic or political reality.² In an effort therefore to justify his principles Morel ignored history. Having seen that land settlement was a sine qua non for the formulation of his Indirect Rule ideas, he enthusiastically mistook a complicated terrain for a tabula rasa.

Holt, however, supported Morel's efforts to see the principles of the Northern Nigeria Law extended to Southern Nigeria. He wished that "Strachey would get on with the Land Ordinance," and wanted it extended to the South "or you will have the land sharks at work

1. Al., 18 Feb. 1910.

2. For the Yoruba civil wars see ^{RS.} Smith and J.F.A. Ajayi, Yoruba Wars of the Nineteenth Century (Ibadan, 1964).

gobbling up the whole country."¹ He urged Morel to fight on so that "the cosmopolitan crew of lawyers and lawyer-guided black Englishmen in Lagos" would not use "the whiteman's methods for robbing the natives of their land." He felt that most of the educated natives were "a greedy, selfish lot for the most part and care not for abstract native land rights and customs;" but rather would "use their English mental training to play the part of sharks on anyone black or white who is not a match for them in cunning and unscrupulousness."² Indeed, like Morel, Holt wanted the underlying principle of the Northern Nigeria Land Legislation extended to all other West African Colonies, particularly the Gold Coast where it seemed there was a repetition of the experience in speculations promoted by Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company. He expressed the need for extending the Northern Nigerian Law to other Colonies in a letter praising Percy Girouard:

"I wish to God we had all Girouards in our Colonies in West Africa. We should then have the land laws of the Gold Coast put on a proper footing, and the natives protected from being fooled out of their rights. That place requires uncommonly keen watching

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1. Holt to Morel, 9 Jan. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.
 2. Holt to Morel, 20 Jan. 1910., F8/4, EDMP.

just now that all these concession mongers are about. If we do not mind, they will take the whole country away from the blacks, and start their infernal gambling machine in London, which plays havoc wherever they go, to the poor and helpless, just as they have done in the Congo"¹

Morel, therefore, had Holt's unstinted support in his protracted efforts to direct the attention of the Colonial Office and the British public at large towards the state of affairs in the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria. At the same time, he appealed to the Liverpool and Manchester Chambers of Commerce, in the name of their former spokeswoman, Mary Kingsley, to unite in protest against the process by which "chief after chief in the Gold Coast is permitted to barter away the produce of the lands of his people for generations for a mere song."² The reaction of the Chambers of Commerce was by no means encouraging, but Morel's appeal to them was timely. A few months previously the Associated Chambers of Commerce had carried a resolution moved by Sir A. Firth, that reservations of Crown Lands should be made in British West Africa with a view to reimbursing British national outlays on those protectorates³ - a move which Lord Alfred Emmott,

1. Holt to Morel, 5 July 1910, F8/4, EDM.P.

2. AM., 27 Nov. 1910.

3. AM., 27 May 1910.

Morel's friend, immediately rejected.¹

Apart from persistent articles in the African Mail, Morel continued to memorialise the Colonial Office. His letter of June 1910 took the usual form which demonstrates his maturity as a critic, for while he aimed at carrying the Colonial office along with him, he never failed to praise the moral and imperial obligation of Britain towards her West African wards.² Moreover, his memorials rather than being mere comprehensive drafts of his philosophical ideas, were often coupled with detailed information which supported his arguments. His attachment, in this instance, of a very long and informative letter from a certain "Veritas Interitas"³ proved most convincingly the administrative imperfections of the Concessions Ordinance,⁴ and clarified the nature of the land question on the Gold

1. AM. July 1910; AM. 31 March 1911.
2. Morel to C.O. 21 June 1910 CO 879/109. C.P.
Morel to Crewe 21 June 1910 CO 96/504.
3. Mensah Sarbah was the real correspondent. Sarbah, John Mensah, 1864-1910; son of John Sarbah of Cape Coast; merchant and Member of Leg Co. Educ. in England; first Gold Coast barrister; founder-member of the G.C.A.R.P.S. 1897; Member Leg Co. 1900 - 10; author of Fanti Customary Law (1897) and Fanti National Constitution (1906); educationist and co-founder of Mfantshipim School, 1904.
4. For the background to the Concessions Ordinance See D. Kimble, Ghana, op. cit.

Coast. W.D. Ellis was influenced by the memorial when he
minuted:

"Although the enclosure is an anonymous letter - I do not think we need scruple to take action upon it on that ground - especially as the character of the writer is vouched for by Mr. Morel, and it consists, to a large extent, of statements of fact which can readily be proved or disproved. I have been of opinion for some little time that the administration of the Concession Ordinance by the Supreme Court is not now wholly satisfactory; and on a question in the House of Commons by Mr. Macdonald, I have suggested that the Governor should be asked to report upon it"¹

A few days after, Morel followed this up with another disarming letter, this time attaching a prospectus issued by "the Mania River Rubber Estates Limited", which typically illustrated the grounds of complaint made by Mensah Sarbah in his anonymous letter. Some of the anomalies complained of included claims by that Company of land rights four times greater than what it was legally entitled to hold under the Concessions Ordinance, its payments for those alleged rights of a ridiculous rental, and its assertion that "the validity of the options are guaranteed", which could not be so if the Concessions Ordinance held good. But, as Morel pointed out, the

1. Minute of 21 June 1910 by W.D. Ellis on Morel to Crewe 21 June 1910, CO 96/504.

"Mamla Rivers Estates Ltd.," was merely one of the numerous companies springing up every week on the Gold Coast. He told the Colonial Office that he was not opposed to sub-surface rights being granted to Europeans, since the natives could not "themselves conduct deep level mining and develop the mineral resources of their country", provided that some supervision was exercised over the expenditure of money received, that surface rights were not disturbed, and that pressure was not exercised in obtaining native labour. Also, he raised no great objection to the exploitation of the timber of some of the interior forests under the same conditions and for the same reason. But any encroachment by the companies on any produce which was vital for the social and economic life of the people found Morel's oppositional spirit deeply aroused:

"....From time immemorial the products of the palm have been at once a staple article of external trade and internal consumption and use; and it cannot be regarded otherwise than as a grave menace to the prosperity and social necessities of the Natives that the control of these articles and of rubber and cocoa should be made over to strangers. So far as cocoa is concerned, the natives of the Gold Coast have themselves built up in a short space of time a considerable industry in this article"¹

1. Morel to Crewe, 27 June 1910, CO 96/504.

On the social and economic implications of this system of "spurious" development, Morel's indictment was not only incisive but also pathetic:

".... (It would) reduce the native of the Gold Coast from a trader and agriculturist in his own right, to whose increasing wealth and purchasing capacity the customs revenues of the Dependency must look for progressively advancing receipts, to the dead level of the hired labourer at 1/3d. a day ... 'Development' of this character may enrich a handful of British Company promoters and shareholders. It must impoverish the protected subject races of Great Britain in West Africa by paralysing native initiative, progress and production, lay the basis in this region for economic servitude instead of free expansion, react adversely upon the British industries concerned in supplying the requirements of West Africa, and eventually threaten the prosperity of the British Dependencies."

Armed with this ethical and economic argument, Morel urged Lord Crew to amend the Concessions Ordinance and to enact some entirely fresh legislation to stop the activities of the Chiefs, the educated natives and the European Company promoters in the Gold Coast.

Within the Colonial Office Morel's letter with its illustrations was compelling. Supporting these views expressed, Ellis minuted: "...This is merely a particularly gross instance of the way under the Concessions Ordinance land is being granted away by native

1. Morel to Crewe, 27 June 1910, CO 96/504.

chiefs at absurdly inadequate sum and finally floated on the British Public at absurdly extravagant ones. The steps, underlined in the prospectus, by which this property has changed hands within a year at sums rising from £100 to £60,000 are instructive...."¹ Strachey agreed with Ellis: "....They seem to reveal a most undesirable state of affairs, and it is just such operations as these which Sir. P. Girouard was determined to prevent being possible 'for all time' in Northern Nigeria..... The successive transfers of the rights over the area, referred to above by Mr. Ellis, are indeed astonishing....."²

1. Minute of 29 June 1910 by W.D. Ellis on Morel to Crewe, 21 June 1910, CO 96/504.

2. The following successive transfers as sketched by Strachey in his minute is illustrative.

May 4, 1909: Two coloured gentlemen paid £100 to a number of native chiefs and others for an 'option'.

Mar.15,1910: They sold it for £1,000 cash and £10,000 fully paid shares to J.G. Brown = £11,000

Apr.16,1910: (a month later) Brown sells it for £4,500 cash, £10,000 fully paid shares and £10,000 either cash or shares to the 'vending syndicate' = £24,500.

Apr.25,1910: (9 days later) They sell it to the Alliance Exploitations for £5,000 cash, £10,000 shares and £15,000 cash or shares = £30,000.

Jun.20,1910: Agreement for sale for a total of £60,000.

Thus property leased or purchased from natives with £100, is now promoted and sold for £60,000 within a year. (See Minute by Strachey (ibid)).

Strachey, who had the day before discussed these concessions with Morel, commended the good work done by his friend to the Colonial Office in the same minute: "..... He is at present on very good terms with this office, and I think it is worth our while, as he is an honest man, to keep him so. I think the F.O. must regret that they have not been able to do this in connection with the Congo."¹ The Secretary of State although he minuted that "there is nothing novel about the rise in price", was troubled that "the natives should be allowed to make such a bad bargain....", and doubted "whether the transaction was within the law" as it then stood.²

A few days later, the Colonial Office received a memorandum on Gold Coast lands submitted by E.C. Eliot, a Provincial Commissioner in Ashanti. These Notes on the alienation of 'stool' and 'Tribal' lands by native purchase, and by grants under the provisions of the Concessions Ordinance" made charges similar to Morel's.³ Ellis minuted:

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1. Minute of 30 June 1910 by Strachey on (ibid)
 2. Minute of 4 July 1910 by Crewe on Morel to Crewe 27 June 1910, CO 96/504.
 3. E.C. Eliot to C.O. 6 July 1910, "Notes on the alienation of 'stool' and 'Tribal' Lands by native purchase, and by grants under the provisions of the Concessions Ordinance." CO 96/504.

"This is interesting throughout - though not new. It is the old story - familiar in Fiji and elsewhere - of the chiefs claiming absolute ownership over tribal lands. If Sir W. Maxwell's Bill vesting all waste and forest lands in the Crown had been carried all would have been well - But I understand that it was abandoned owing to pressure from native lawyers and chiefs. It has been now recognised in the case of N. Nigeria that Sir W. Maxwell's was the correct policy. It may not be too late to apply it now to the N. Territories."¹ Just concurred in this need for urgent attention: "It seems clear that we shall have to move in the matter before very long."² Colonel Seeley agreed with him: "Yes, we must not delay too long."³ The Colonial Office immediately asked the Gold Coast Governor to give this matter his early attention and to furnish it with a report.⁴

1. Minute of 8 July 1910 by J.D. Ellis on Eliot to CO, 6 July 1910, CO 96/504.

2. Minute of 8 July 1910 by Just (ibid)

3. Minute of 8 July 1910 by Seeley (ibid)

4. Crewe to Rodger, 11 July 1910, CO 879/109. C.P.

John Rodger, in his reply, accepted that a very large proportion of land in the Colony had been alienated already under the Concessions Ordinance of 1900; but in respect of those lands not already alienated, he would wish to secure four objectives aimed at resolving the problem. He wanted the area alienable to each group restricted, and disagreed with the interpretation given by Justice Purcell to the "area" clauses which had the effect of stultifying the whole intentions of the Concessions Ordinance.¹ Secondly, he wanted the reservation of Native Rights provided in Section 11(6) of the Ordinance further enforced. Thirdly, he advocated a continuous and effective working of the Concessions, for there was "at present no rule prescribing this most necessary conditions of every mining Concession." Fourthly, he wanted "reasonable payments to be reasonably expended", since there was "no provision for the proper expenditure of these rents which the chiefs and other councillors receive on account of tribal land and therefore as tribal trustees....."² It would appear that most of the objections raised by Morel and Mensah and Barbah were upheld by Rodger, even the necessity for new

1. For a discussion of the Concessions Ordinance, See Kimble, op. cit.

2. Rodger to Crewe, 29 Aug. 1910, CO 879/109.

legislation. But the reformism and broad view of John Rodger was never completely followed up by his assistants, and in October of the same year, the Acting Governor, H. Bryan, wrote to the Secretary of State, defending the Colonial Government against the charges in Morel's correspondence and those of "Veritas Interitas."¹

While Morel was exposing the Gold Coast scandals weekly in the African Mail, memorialising and lobbying the Colonial Office, questions were being asked in Parliament. On 4 July 1910, Ramsay Macdonald asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he had information on the manner and terms of certain concessions alleged given to companies in the Gold Coast recently, and whether he considered that the public interest of the Colony was sufficiently safeguarded "against arrangements of this character which tend to place the economic development of the native races in the hands of European financial corporations." While Macdonald was worried about the social and economic effects of these transactions, Wedgewood wanted the Colonial Office to take steps to put the land system of the

1. Ag. Gov. H. Bryan to Crewe 5 Oct. 1910, CO 879/109.

Gold Coast on the same footing, "as in other British possessions on that coast."¹

The tenacious campaigns by Morel and members of Parliament, supported as they were by the evidence of Rodger and the memorandum of Eliot, might have opened the eyes of the Colonial Office; but what measure of hesitancy that was entertained there was dispelled by new scaring African Mail editorials. Blaming the Colonial Office for being "legislatively unprepared" to deal with the new situation, Morel went all out against the stock-jobbing imperialism reminiscent of the speculative fever which had seized the city of London over the Gold of South Africa:

"Influences have been let loose which aim undisguisedly at reducing the role of the native of West Africa to that of a mere hired labourer; at capturing his powers of production, at placing him in such a position, by infringing his proprietary rights in land, that presently he shall be forced into a position of absolute economic dependence upon alien financial interests. Those who pull the strings do so under cover of sonorous platitudes, which have ever disguised unadulterated selfishness. Their "Imperialism" is the parochialism of their own pockets. "Progress" to them spells dividends. They play for their own hand while rating of "development" for the good of the State. Assisted by the weakness and improvidence of the native chiefs, they hold the cards, unless the legislator

1. H.C. Debs. 5 . Vol. XVIII 1910, 1305, 1305-6. See also CO 879/109. No. 11.

perceives the danger and steps in. We ask the Colonial Office to face the danger, to grapple with it and, brushing details aside, to deal resolutely and promptly with the great principles at stake - not to wait until these principles can no longer be disentangled from the mesh of vested interests fast obscuring their true imports - for the welfare of these peoples whose future is our trust, and for the honour of our rule."¹

Almost immediately after^{wards}, a Colonial Office memorandum, drawn up by Ellis, and which analysed the grounds for reforms, acknowledged the importance of the complaints which had come from Morel, Wedgewood and Macdonald; and when added to those of Rodger and Eliot, formed the main basis of reforms intended by the officials. The memorandum made four main observations. Although the Concessions Ordinance and its amendments seemed "fair and reasonable", their administration by the Supreme Court had been unsatisfactory: at least one of the judges had been lax in giving effect to their provisions. Secondly, it was found very difficult to ascertain who really had the right to give grants of the lands: "the chiefs and heads of families might have only fiduciary rights, and in the absence of a Domesday Survey of the Colony, it was almost impossible for the judges to go behind the evidence brought before them by the Chiefs

1. AM. 29 July 1910. See also AM. 4 Nov. 1910.

who were anxious to sell their supposed rights." In this connection, it was the view of Ellis that the question that was most important was that "of protecting the native common people, and especially their posterity against their chiefs and the native lawyers." Thirdly, it was observed that the Concessions Ordinance was drawn up practically for mining Concessions ('though it included in its purview other concessions'); but since people and companies had started acquiring land for growing rubber and cocoa, it became difficult to see how "the native rights as to sharing game, shifting cultivation," etc. could be protected on such concessions. Fourthly, it was found that the clause restricting the area at once acquirable was readily evaded by people and companies getting grants in different names and then amalgamating. Although Ellis held that it was in the interest of all that a reasonable field should be offered to European enterprise, he, however, found it "certainly not desirable that any large proportion of the land of the Colony should pass into private hands, destroying the tribal system, and the authority of the Chiefs, and reducing the natives to the position of day labourers." Since there was uncertainty as to what actually was the amount of land conceded

or was in process of being conceded, Ellis emphasised the need for investigation.¹

Morel was away in West Africa at this time, but his articles on these scandals appeared weekly in the African Mail. On 16th August 1910, Ellis had minuted: "...Mr. Morel is on the war path and we may expect a storm when the Parliament opens".² The storm which then broke out in Parliament persisted until the following year. From February 1911 till December of the same year, Josiah Wedgewood and Ramsay Macdonald especially, continued to harass the Government with questions on Land legislation in West Africa and Gold Coast scandals in particular.³

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1. CO Memo: 'Complaints as to treatment of Natives (Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia) by W.D. Ellis 22 Nov. 1910, CO 879/109.
 2. Minute of 16 Aug. 1910 by W.D. Ellis on Morel to Crewe 27 June 1910, CC 96/504.
 3. Questions were put by Wedgewood on 29 June 1910, 4 July 1910, 15 Feb. 1911, 4 April 1911; by Macdonald on 11 April 1911, 19 June 1911, 9 Nov. 1911.

See HC Debs. 5s. Vol XIX	745-6
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXI, 1911	1033
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXIII, 1911	1989, 1517
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXIV, 1911	425-6
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXVII, 1911	124
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXX, 1911	1816-7
HC Debs. 5s. Vol XXXII, 1911	389, 390.

The necessity for a thorough investigation had become crystal clear. On 12 September 1911, the Colonial Office informed Henry Conway Belfield¹ that Harcourt proposed to appoint him to report on the working of the legislation governing the alienation of native lands in the Gold Coast including Ashanti.² Belfield had much colonial experience and had also supervised and examined land questions in the Far East.

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1. Born on 29 Nov. 1855, he was the eldest son of John Belfield, J.P. of Primley Hill, South Devon, and Elizabeth Conway, eldest daughter of Captain George Bridges, B.N. After a career at Oriel College, Oxford, Belfield^{was} called to Bar at the Inner Temple in 1880, whence he practised on the Western Circuit and at the Devon and Exeter sessions. In 1884 he entered Selanger Civil Service as Magistrate and by 1888 he had become the Chief Magistrate of Selangor, and that of Perak in 1892. On the Federation of the Malay States in 1896 Belfield was appointed its just Commissioner of Lands and Mines; but acted as British Resident at Selangor between 1897 and 1901 and had undertaken special missions to Labuan and Brunei in 1905. In May 1908, he was made Ag. Resident-General, Federate Malay States, to become the Br. Resident in Perak later in 1911. D.N.B.

2. CO to Belfield, 12 Sept. 1911, CO 879/109.

Belfield's terms of reference were basically seven. He was directed to find out how far the alienation of native land to Europeans, which was going on in the Gold Coast, (having regard to the probable increase of population), threatened to deprive the natives of adequate land for their sustenance, whether such alienation was beneficial to the natives by acquainting them with new and improved industries or enabling them to earn higher wages. He was to report on whether the prevalent system under which alienation of native land was controlled only by the Supreme Court was satisfactory or whether the control should be transferred to the Executive Government; and whether the condition of the Concessions Ordinance that the proper parties must have agreed to the grants was fulfilled. He was also to find out whether the consideration paid for the concession was actually adequate or whether it was possible to lay down any general standard of adequacy; whether the consideration received was spent by the Chiefs in the general interest of the tribe, and if not, whether any steps could be taken to secure this object. Lastly, he was to report on whether it was possible to take any better measures to secure better^{use}/of the lands granted, and to prevent them being made mere counters for Company

promoters.¹

After making preliminary enquiries in Britain, Belfield left Liverpool by S.S. Barutu on 31 Jan. 1912. Arriving at Accra on 16th February, he began taking his evidence, which process engaged him for two and a half months. The findings of Belfield² generally confirmed the fears of the critics even if he did not always recommend what they wished. Apart from his declaration that the Crown had no general rights over the lands of the Colony and that any attempt to assert such rights would be generally and rightly resented, Belfield reported that there was no danger, under the present system, of so much land being alienated as to unduly restrict the amount available for the native population, which however he did not believe was on the increase. He favoured a retention of supervision by the Judiciary. But he found that the system of validating concessions by the Supreme Court was unduly expensive and dilatory and did not give the natives the

1. CO to Belfield, 25 Sept. 1911, CO 879/109.

2. Report on the Legislation governing the alienation of Native Lands in the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti; with some observations on the Forest Ordinance, 1911 by H. Conway Belfield, C.M.G. Presented to Parliament in 1911. (Cd. 6278).

assistance they required. He recommended that there should be substituted for this system one under which Commissioners of Lands should advise the chiefs in concert with the District Provincial Commissioners as to the fairness of the consideration for a proposed concession and the desirability of granting it, the final decision being, however, left to the chiefs. If a concession was opposed by third parties, he recommended that there could be an appeal to the Supreme Court, on a payment of a substantial fee, but not otherwise.¹

On the other hand, Belfield's observations revealed the true state of affairs in the Gold Coast although he did not follow them up to their logical end in his recommendations. He found that the chiefs' sense of obligation towards the tribe in respect of trusteeship was obscured by their greed for money. In some instances they had misappropriated the proceeds for personal use, a practice which was almost always resented by the people who then destooled these chiefs.² Moreover, the chiefs and their advisers had no

1. See Minutes of 17 June 1912 by Ellis on Belfield to CO 18 June 1912 (enclosing report) which summarise the most important conclusions of the report. CO 96/525.

2. Cd. 6278, op. cit., Para. 29.

proper knowledge of the areas alienated due to ignorance of standard mensuration. It was this, he observed, not fraud, which on the whole led to overlapping of concessions. Belfield also discovered that the chiefs most involved in concessions were those most indebted, and that the agricultural districts with little or no concessions had few indebted chiefs. The debts, which in some individual instances showed a total of four figures in sterling, had been incurred, for the most part, by unnecessary litigation, and the local lawyers, who charged these fees, encouraged this proclivity.¹

At the same time, Belfield found that the chiefs disposed these sums in accordance with recognised conventional practice, but that this practice was at variance with traditional norms. They were supposed to exercise their authority for the common benefit of the tribe as a body, but they actually spent the money for purposes from which the ordinary members of the community derived no advantage. Thus he saw that the tribe was deprived of a substantial area of its land for a

1. Ibid. Para 33.

period which left it virtually dispossessed for two or three generations, and yet got no sort of compensation for the diminution of its property. He found the inability of the mass of the people to share either directly or indirectly in the revenues accruing from concessions as an objectionable feature of the existing system, and recommended that an improvement would be effected if part of the money were set aside to be expended on works for the benefit of the community.¹

Three other observations of Belfield are germane to this discussion. Although he wanted this done in a manner that would make the people feel that they still controlled their land, he yet made a case for such official intervention as would put a stop to the improvident disposal of tribal lands. He saw that there was nothing in the Concessions Ordinance to prevent the Concessionaire from practically working his concessions even before he got a Certificate of Validity for it. And he found that "those who favoured the retention of the prevailing system were in a minority and their status and experience was not as a rule such as would lend substantial weight to their expressed opinion."

1. Ibid. Para. 35.

Moreover, "those opinions were not always free from the faint of personal bias or of a desire to retain pecuniar advantage to themselves."¹

The Colonial Office received Belfield's report with gracious felicity. Sir J. Anderson accordingly minuted: "... this is a very useful and helpful report and Mr. Belfield should be thanked for it. I agree generally with the conclusions both on the general questions and the Forest Ordinance, and there should be no delay in getting a commissioner of lands and setting our house in order on the lines recommended."² Lord Emmott was glad that the report would be published since, as ^{he} observed, it had been "a subject of apparently unfounded suspicion in some quarters already."³ After Harcourt had read it, he minuted that "a letter of warm appreciation should be written to Mr. Belfield."⁴ Yet these positive intentions to implement the recommendations of the report were already rendered nugatory by other forces

1. Ibid, Paras. 21-23, 37.
2. Minute of 20 June 1912, by J. Anderson on Belfield to CO 18 June 1912. CO 96/525.
3. Minute of 21 June 1912 by Lord Emmott (ibid) the suspicion is illustrated later in this chapter.
4. Minute of 1 July 1912 by L. Harcourt. (ibid).

outside the Office.

Although the Belfield mission was mainly a result of the importunate demands for inquiry made by Morel and others, it appeared that even before the arrival of the report Morel had removed his hopes from it. As has been seen, Belfield's observations confirmed almost all the allegations which Morel and others had made, but his recommendations ruled out the logical application of Morel's thesis. Out of moderate good sense, Morel described the report as "a document of very great value, conspicuous for temperate fairness," but he was at the same time of the opinion that "the principles of native land tenure existing in our British West African possessions should not be left to spasmodic enquiry, outside investigation and chance discovery."¹ If anything, Morel would have wished that the Colonial Office adopted his own suggestion of extending the principle of the Northern Nigeria legislation to other West African Colonies. Wedgewood had agreed with Morel that the best procedure was to have the principle "extended to Southern Nigeria; and then, I hope, to the Gold Coast."²

1. A.I., 19 July 1912.

2. Wedgewood to Morel, 8 Aug. 1911. F.9. EDMP.

He had previously alerted the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society and had solicited that Society to back him up in his efforts to induce the Colonial Office to report on the alienations of land going on in the Colonies.¹ But even before Belfield reported, as Emmott hinted in his minute, rumours became current that the mining interests "had got hold of him". It was alleged that Giles Hunt's² clerk had become the Commissioner's clerk, and everybody who was opposed to indiscriminate alienation of land regarded all the influence of Giles Hunt as being in opposition to true native interests.³

Morel, therefore, despite his admiration for Belfield's observations, felt that this report sat on the fence. He was too much a believer in the importance of the land in the African social and political system to stop his campaigns because of a report which his colleague, Wedgewood, later described as calculated to

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1. Minutes, Committee, ASS, 7 April 1911 item 1900; E2/12, Vol. VII.
 2. Hunt, Giles, An English barrister practising in Cape Coast; connected with various concessions in which he acted as legal intermediary; Unofficial Member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council, 1903-13.
 3. Harris to Wedgewood, 20 May 1912; MSS Brit. Emp. S. 19. D 3/5. Copy.

encourage concession-mongers.¹ Morel was convinced that "the secret" of all the outrages upon humanity was to be found in the land; and that 'if the natives of Tropical Africa could be fixed on the land and their tenure guaranteed, an obstacle would have been put to their exploitation."² And he saw the best way to this "gigantic fight" in applying the principles of the Northern Nigeria legislation to the other Colonies. He made this point repeatedly but always in the usual dogmatic tone in which it appeared that no other alternative was workable:

"Legislation is required which shall lay down the cardinal principles that the lands of West Africa are native lands - whether occupied or unoccupied - over which the British Government shall exercise supreme control in the interests of the natives and in accordance with ascertained native law and custom - Northern Nigeria has led the way. It is time the other dependencies followed suit. Only in this way can future generations of West Africans be secured from the enemy without and the enemy on their own hearths ..."³

It was dawning on any members of Parliament also that this extension was vital to the maintenance of

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1. African (West) No. 1047. Qs. 135-140: Wedgewood to Belfield.
 2. Morel to Holt, 12 April 1911, 18/8; J.H.P.
 3. A.M., May 1912.

native land rights in West Africa. When on Wednesday 15th May 1912 the British Government issued a White Paper on Colonial Lands,¹ certain Labour and Liberal members of Parliament² interested in native questions convened a meeting at which it was suggested that the only method of preventing alienation was through that system which had inspired the Northern Nigeria Land Ordinance of 1910. They then called upon Parliament to urge against the sale of native lands whether by the Crown or by the chiefs, and proposed to approach the Government to ask for a Committee to go into the matter and make recommendations on the extension of the Northern Nigeria law and native rights system to the other African Crown Colonies and Protectorates, except perhaps British East Africa which had white settlers. The African Mail hailed this movement:

"It may not be possible or desirable, to adopt the same forms of words everywhere. But forms are matters of small importance compared with the principle itself. For the free development of West African commerce and industry - and the evolution in security of tenure of the African races

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1. No. 68: 'Land in Crown Colonies and Protectorates' printed 15 May 1912.
 2. William Byles (Liberal M.P.), Noel Buxton (Lab. M.P.), Philip Morrell (Liberal, M.P.), P.W. Raffan (Liberal M.P.), J.C. Wedgewood (Labour M.P.).

under our protection, it is essential that the ultimate lordship over the soil should be vested in the British Government. This is the only means we can see to prevent the break-up of African land tenure and the mortgaging of African rights in the soil and the soil's products. As in the case of the Northern Nigeria Ordinance, legislation should establish beyond doubt that the lands are native lands held in trust by the Government on behalf of the African races and controlled in accordance with native customary laws. Working from that basis, it should be possible anywhere to strengthen and vitalise African institutions and to perfect the system of native administration, without infringing legitimate European enterprise.¹

These land ideas, which had been expressed either individually or corporately, crystallised in the famous letter to the Times of 6 June 1912 written by E.D. Morel, Noel Buxton, J. Ramsay Macdonald, Philip Morrell, Sir Albert Spicer and J.C. Wedgewood. After making several observations on the nature of land tenure in West Africa, this letter made the most important recommendation as to land policy when it declared:

"What is required in all our tropical dependencies in West Africa, where there are no white settlers, are land Acts, which, however they may vary in their form of wording, and in their application in accordance with the character of the political relationship prevailing between their inhabitants and the paramount Power, shall secure the threefold aim of legalizing the rights of the natives to the occupancy and use of the soil, preventing the creation of monopolies in the soil's produce, whether natural or cultivated, and reserving the value of the land and freedom of access to it for the future

1. A.M., 31 May 1912.

generations of our protected subjects."¹

The letter further suggested that an experienced Committee should be appointed by the Colonial Office, as was done in the case of Northern Nigeria, to inquire into the problems which this letter raised, questions which it claimed went to "the foundations of sound administration in these tropical regions under British protection." Exactly two weeks after this letter, the West African Lands Committee was appointed by the Colonial Office with Morel and Wedgewood among its members.²

The appointment of this Committee at the instance

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1. The Times, 6 June 1912.
 2. The West African Lands Committee was appointed by the C.O. on 20th June 1912 with the following as members: Sir Kenelm E. Digby, G.C.B., K.C. (Chairman); Sir N.M. Hodgson, K.C.M.G.; Sir W. Taylor, K.C.M.G.; Sir William Raper; J.C. Wedgewood MR; E.D. Morel; C. Strachey and W.D. Ellis (both of the C.O.) H.F. Batterbee of the C.O. was its Secretary.

It was "to consider the laws in force in the West African Colonies and protectorates (other than Northern Nigeria) regulating the conditions under which rights over land or the produce thereof may be transferred, and to report whether any, and, if so, what amendment of the laws is required either on the lines of the Northern Nigeria Land Proclamation or otherwise."

The Committee sat 52 times for the taking of oral evidence and 79 witnesses came before them. In addition a great deal of evidence was taken on commission in West Africa. War broke out while revision of Part II of the report was proceeding and prevented any further discussion of the Report by the Full Committee as Part I had been. But the Report was completed in 1915.

The Report is published as African (West) No. 1046; Minutes of Evidence as African (West) No. 1047; and Memoranda as African (West) No. 1048.

of Morel and his colleagues, however, inspired an opposition spirit among interested parties, opposition which, in any case, might have been expected were it not for the surprising attack on Morel from an important section of the merchant community itself. At the annual meeting of the West African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, its chairman G.A. Moore¹ had criticized the composition of the new Lands Committee and "could not under any circumstances approve of it." Moore's criticism, however, was not always free from selfish interests. He would have wished to see a merchant as a member of the Committee to recommend in favour of that class:

"The only laymen who were appointed to it were Mr. Morel and Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, and we know that both these gentlemen have very decided views on land tenure, and we hardly thought that they could bring the same unbiased judgement to consideration of these questions that we had a right to expect. Mr. Morel, we all know and like, but he has no practical experience of the African trade, and does not know what the requirements of the merchants are"²

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1. Moore, George Arbuthnot; Born Birkenhead 16 March 1857; son of Charles Moore of Easterlands, Somerset. Educ. at Birkenhead School; Stuttgart and Wurtenburg; Appointed member of Advisory Committee of Overseas Trade by Sir A.S. Maitland at its inception; a member of the Interim Provisional-Council to the Board of Trade by Sir A. Stanley; Chairman of the Council of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1918-19; and of its African Trade Section from 1909; Chairman of the Taxation & Finance Committee of the Council of the Association of Br. Chambers of Commerce, 1921-3, and a Liverpool, representative on the Council of that Association. Died 3 Dec. 1923.
 2. Journal of Commerce, 27 May 1913. Morel to Hanhemann Stuart
29 May 1913.

Moore was probably right when he alleged that Morel held too rigid views on land, but his opposition stemmed mainly from his unwarranted assumption that Morel was opposed to merchants getting security of tenure for their establishments and from his selfish view of the Committee as though it were merely concerned with matters of trade. Moreover, Morel must have found it extremely difficult to understand how Moore could credit him ex hypothesi with sentiments other than those of friendliness towards legitimate commercial interest, and antagonism to commercial monopolies of all kinds; hence he regarded Moore's opinion as "singular topsy-turvydom."¹

As a matter of fact, Morel's career to date in no way justified Moore's diatribes. For more than twenty years Morel had consistently opposed anything calculated to interfere with the free development of commerce between European merchants and Africans. He took a vigorous line against the monopoly of the Niger Company and helped to destroy it. He was officially thanked by the West African Trade Section of the Liverpool

1. Morel to G.A. Moore, 29 May, 1913. Copy, F.9.

Chambers of Commerce for his onslaught upon the Concessionaire regime in the French Congo, and his writings, and the action in the House of Commons which these inspired, contributed greatly to compensation being offered to British firms which had suffered from that regime. For about fifteen years he had been engaged in a great struggle which finally, inter alia, had resulted in throwing open the Congo Basin to British trade and British merchants. He was the first to denounce the "Concession-mongery" which was reducing the prosperity of Gold Coast. It was largely due to a series of articles in the African Mail and letters to the Colonial Office that Belfield was appointed to investigate on the spot; and the present Committee was a result of his tenacity. With this impressive record of humanitarian and legitimate mercantile interest, Morel's lament for Moore's unwarranted criticism was not without justification:

"I should have imagined that (this record) would have entitled me to expect at the hands of West African merchants not only immunity from criticism - but a certain amount of satisfaction at my appointment to a Committee charged with making recommendations on these questions. Criticisms and attacks from Stock

Exchange influences; from concession-mongers; from a class of educated natives who have been engaged in battoning upon the ignorance and cypidity of their illiterate brothers - these I anticipated. But that criticism and attack should come from the class whose interests I have done not a little to defend for many years, I neither anticipated nor have deserved."¹

It was a great pity that Moore remained unconvinced. He stuck to his opinion that Morel's views were not in agreement with those of the merchants.² But Moore did not dominate the Chamber though he greatly influenced it. Some members, like Pickering Jones, acknowledged that Morel had "made a very careful study of the question from the historical and other points of view not yet tackled by the merchants," and rejoiced that Morel was in the Committee.³ Holt was so chagrined at Moore's pronouncements that he wondered whether Moore had thought about the land question at all.⁴ He positively gave Morel his support and the usual word of

1. Morel to G.A. Moore, 29 May 1913 Copy, F.9. EDMP

2. Moore to Morel, 30 May 1913, F. 9. EDMP.

3. Pickering Jones to Morel, 6 June 1913, F. 9. EDMP.
A.J. Fontanaz to Morel, 8 June 1913, F. 9. EDMP.

4. Holt to Morel, 30 Nov. 1912, F 8/4, EDMP.

inspiration:

"You are as well fitted as any merchant I know to set forth the position of the merchants in Southern Nigeria in regard to Land either for the merchants' use or anybody's; but we merchants indeed are a slow lot going on the old lines instead of wakening up to what is going on around us, so we are a prey to jealousies and doubts instead of being well informed by reading and thinking so as to qualify ourselves for the guidance of up-to-date people"¹

Moore's reaction was symptomatic of inner questionings within the Liverpool Chamber. It was, in part, a reflection of the traditional Chamber of Commerce attitude of using humanitarian pretensions to achieve economic advantages. Also it was largely in consonance with the progressive repudiation by that Chamber of those ideas which Morel stood for. Over the land question, however, there was no unanimous opposition to Morel and his Radical colleagues by that body, and they might have been expected to direct their energies to the work of the Committee, except that they now had to contend with educated native opposition which, in any case, they had anticipated.

A few weeks after the Radical letter to the Times, T.F.L. Jones, Casel~~ey~~ Hayford, E.J.P. Brown and

1. Holt to Morel, 5 June 1913, F 8/4, EDMP.

B.W. Quartey-Papafio, all "members of the Deputation appointed by the Kings and Chiefs of the Gold Coast to oppose the Forest Bill of 1911," published a reply, refuting the conclusions and recommendations in the letter of June. They maintained that since the Gold Coast land had belonged to its people from time immemorial, no legislation was necessary to secure this. They pointed out that the chief was not merely a "trustee" of the land but a joint-owner with the people, the implication of this being that if the Paramount Power could manoeuvre itself into a position of "trustee" it might then proceed to claim that of "joint-owner". Moreover, they said that the whole land would not be controlled by the Governor since the Crown had never laid claim to acquisition of lands of their country by conquest, cession or purchase. They then considered as "superfluous" the point that the Governor's power should be exercised with due regard to native customs, particularly as the circumstances on the Gold Coast were held by them to be "wholly different" from Northern Nigeria to warrant the extension of that system.¹

1. The Times, 18 July 1912. In fairness to Morel and his fellow radicals, it must be noted that they merely wanted the principle, and not the form, of the Northern Nigerian law to be applied elsewhere.

Morel immediately became an execrable figure in the Gold Coast press. Some African witnesses before Belfield had already described his mind on the land question as a tabula rasa.¹ A few months afterwards, the Gold Coast Leader had described as "odious" the part he had played "in the land and other recent questions affecting the weal and prosperity of the natives of British West Africa in general and this country in particular;" and had resolved "to watch and challenge at every stage the actions of the man who has proved himself one of the most formidable and cunning opponent we have had to reckon with in recent times." While rejoicing "that no patriotic native of this country has an ounce of confidence in him", this paper had emphasized Morel's notoriety as "the dangerous adversary who adopts in his Welfare Strategy with hypocrisy, mellifluous cant with stupendous ignorance."² Even people like Caseley Hayford, who, were self-interest not involved, might have been expected to know better, took extreme views and accused Morel and his colleagues of being

1. Minutes of Evidence, Cd. 6278.

2. Gold Coast Leader, 6 Dec. 1913. A.M., 13 Jan. 1913.

anti-native.¹

It must be pointed out, however, that the elements of African opposition on the Gold Coast were basically three interested groups. The first were the chiefs who were avid to gain by concessions and ignorant or indifferent to the results of their actions. Then, there were the lawyers and barristers of the Coast towns, who, like Caseley Hayford, had acted in their professional capacities for the European concessionaires and for the chiefs 'ceding' the lands. As Morel put it: "The merrier the concessionaires dance, the more substantial the profits of the gentlemen of the law. The greater the number of concessions, the greater the number of fees for the legal intermediaries". Thirdly, there were other educated natives of the Coast towns who had joined the board of directors of some of these quickly promoted companies when they did not play the role of intermediary which, in any case, was said to be lucrative.²

1. Vide Caseley Hayford, The Truth about the West African Land Question, passim.

2, A.M., 26 Sept 1913. In his letter of 1 July 1897, Maxwell had told Chamberlain that it was the intermediaries who fostered the 1897 opposition to the Land Ordinance of that year. CO 879/154.

a correspondent of the African Mail regarded the proclaimed patriotism of these groups of Africans as phoney when he bitterly denounced them:

"There is something colossal in the effrontery of these men, appealing to sentiments of racial 'patriotism', to 'United West Africa', etc. while assisting alien capitalistic enterprise to fasten a yoke upon their fellow countrymen. The 'liberty' they demand for their ignorant dopes is liberty to sacrifice the inheritance of the West African peoples; liberty to compromise the future so that a handful may benefit today."¹

The official attitude to these conflicting philosophies was still evolving, but even at this point it was becoming more clarified. The Belfield report provided an opportunity for these questions to be resolved, but it had been superseded by the West African Lands Committee. Although the report was presented to Parliament, Colonial Office officials did not think it was wise to proceed with its recommendations when the other Committee was still sitting. Flood minuted according: ".... I am not sure whether it is considered desirable that any action should be taken as yet to carry out Mr. Belfield's recommendations in view of the West African Lands Committee's deliberations. It

1. A.M., 26 Sept. 1913. It is very probable that this correspondent was Morel himself.

might be as well to defer action until they have reported in order to get the question straight without risk of interference for some time...."¹ Ellis later agreed with him: "There is no need to remind the Governor as the proceedings of the Committee have practically rendered this report obsolete. It may be removed from the arrears list"² The same fate met the Forest Ordinance, though discussions on it exposed the tendencies of the official mind vis-a-vis the arguments published on 18 July by members of the Gold Coast Forest deputation.

In a memorandum prepared in June 1912,³ W.D. Ellis not only sketched the history of the Forest measures but also pointed out the disparity between the attitudes of the Colonial Office and those of the Gold Coast opponents of them. In 1907 an Ordinance had been passed to prevent the cutting of immature timber and the Gold Coast Government obtained the services of H.N. Thompson, the Conservator of Forests in Southern Nigeria, to examine the forest resources of the Gold Coast colony and

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1. Minute of 30 Aug. 1912 by Flood, on Belfield to C, 18 June 1912, CO 96/525.
 2. Minute of 25 April 1913 by W.D. Ellis, *ibid.*
 3. Memo. of 24 June 1912, by W.D. Ellis, CO 96/525.

Ashanti. The report, presented at the end of 1908, revealed a very serious state of affairs¹. It was made clear that the forests were gradually degenerating and disappearing and that the consequent loss of water and soil was diminishing the agricultural capacities of the Colony. Forest conservation, therefore, became necessary.

For this purpose, a bill was introduced in October 1910, based, in accordance with Thompson's proposals, on the Southern Nigerian Ordinance. In April 1911, the Colonial Office received protests from the Gold Coast. In May of the same year the bill was withdrawn on the ground that the procedure laid down in it was inconvenient (no doubt the natives believed this withdrawal to be a result of their protest). In August of that year, a new bill was introduced, but again met with strong native opposition within and without the Legislative Council. Before, therefore, the second reading was taken the Governor agreed to substantial modifications which satisfied the three native members of the

1. Cd. 4993/10 of 1908, Pp. 97-99.

Legislative Council, so that the bill was passed without dissent. But the opposition outside the Council did not cease. Acting through their traditional allies, the British legal firm of Ashurst, Morris and Crisp and Company,¹ the Gold Coast elements objected to any form of Government control and especially to the provision for Government leases.

It appears that throughout the whole land controversy in the Gold Coast from the bill of 1894 to Belfield's investigation and the Forest Bill one argument had constantly recurred which was certainly considered most important by the Chiefs and African lawyers.

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1. When on 3 April 1911 this firm forwarded a petition on behalf of the A.N.P.S. against the Forest Bill, Ellis on 20 Oct. 1911 minuted: "The combination of this firm of Company solicitors with local Kings and Chiefs is characteristic and ominous. It was a similar combination which defeated Sir W. Maxwell's Bill for vesting uncultivated lands in the Crown which would have checked the alienation of native lands of which Mr. Morel and others complain. They are afraid that the Forest Bill will stop the proceedings (of which we have had several examples) by which a chief hands over forest lands, of which he is only a trustee, to an agent who sells it then to another agent till they are finally floated on the British Public for £50,000 or so. The lawyers of course get their toll at every stage from the inception of the Company till its burial in Bankruptcy Buildings" Ashurst, Morris Crisp & Co., to CO., 3 April 1911, CO 96/514.

This was to the effect that the Gold Coast tribes were not in the same position as other tribes, for example, in Ashanti (or Northern Nigeria) inasmuch as they had never been conquered, or ceded their land. They always maintained that they were merely "protected" as the result of voluntary agreement. From this argument, they inferred that no legislative interference with their lands was justifiable without the concurrence of the Chiefs.¹

It is true that before 1901 these districts in question were known as "Protected Territories". Though apparently, on the ground of technical convenience, these territories had nevertheless been annexed in 1901. In the memorandum referred to, Ellis pointed out that it could be inferred from the evidence in Belfield's Report that the fact of this annexation was not very clearly apprehended by the people of the Gold Coast. It is probable, as Ellis argued that the letter of 11th March 1887 (which was so unfortunately worded as to imply that annexation would take the soil from the natives) might have caused mistrust in the minds of the

1. Memo. of 24 June 1912 by Ellis, CO 96/525.

natives, but he at the same time pointed out that there was no doubt that the attitude of the Chiefs and their advisers was that the British Government was essentially a foreign Government and that any law bringing any part of the land, tribal or otherwise, under Government administration was confiscatory. Ellis concluded: "The governor holds the view that having annexed the Gold Coast Colony, His Majesty has full authority both by law and by the custom of nations to deal as he thinks fit with the lands which, however, they may be said to have an owner - are in fact State lands which the Chiefs hold in their capacity as petty sovereigns...."¹ Read agreed: "We cannot admit that the power to legislate for peace, order, and good government does not extend to the passing of general land legislation which does not interfere with any nation titles."² The specious arguments of the Gold Coast lawyers were regarded as hardly convincing by the Colonial Office.

The acrimonious press warfare which had

1. Ibid.

2. Minute by V.J.R. 26 June, 1912 (ibid).

also
featured these agitations was/carried on in Southern
Nigeria where the natives were reacting against the Land
measures of the Lagos Government. The first attempt
made by the Lagos Government to legislate with
reference to the lands of the people had been in 1876.
The "Public Lands" Ordinance of that year gave the
Government power to acquire compulsorily any lands
required for public purposes, paying the owner such
compensation as might, in the eyes of the Government, be
deemed ample reimbursement for loss of property. Such
legislation was obviously needed in the interest of
improving towns, by laying out streets and parks, erecting
offices and other buildings. Probably, no great fault
might have been found with this Ordinance but for the
extensive and oppressive use to which the provisions were
later applied. By virtue of the Ordinance, huge
expropriations took place in Lagos, not to make room for
any public buildings, such as hospitals or museums, but to
erect a number of residences for European officials,
while hundreds of natives were evicted.¹ It might be

1. Lagos Standard, Wed. 2 May 1912 discussed this
grievance at length.

argued that since compensation was offered therefore the measures were not necessarily harsh. Yet some of the very sites from which the people were thus evicted were subdivided by the Government and either leased or resold, to the very persons who not more than five years previously had been dispossessed. For example, the former owners of the new Race-Course had to buy lands from the Government along the "Hausa Lines" and at Obalende.¹ On 6 November 1906, Keir Hardie referred the House of Commons to a petition from Lagos, praying for the intervention of the British Government in regard to a Bill passed by the Lagos Legislative Council in August 1906 whereby about 6,000 persons would

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1. There are examples of similar actions on the Gold Coast. It was reported that at Sekondi in 1912 natives were ousted from a district which was required for Europeans (a district to which they had been driven in 1902 in the same manner). It was also discovered that in other districts in Sekondi and in Tarkwa, lands expropriated in 1900 and 1902 from the people under the Public Lands Ordinance, ostensibly for sanitary purposes, were in 1912 being plotted out and rented to Natives. Vide Lagos Standard, 22 May 1912. The 'Hausa Lines' were bounded on the North by Igboere Rd; on the East by Hunter Street, on the South by Catholic Mission Street and vacant Govt. land adjoining the Race Course; and on the West by Glover Street. It was set aside in 1863 by Gov. Glover as a place where non-commissioned officers and men of the Lagos constabulary would build themselves quarters and reside so long as they remained in active service of the said force. This later became the Lagos battalion of the WAFF.

be dispossessed of their property. He implored the Colonial Office to protect these people who would "be cast out in their old age, homeless and helpless" if the Bill came into operation.¹ Although in 1910 when the issue came up again in the Commons, Colonel Seeley defended the Colonial Government by saying that the claimants were compensated and that the local government "appeared to err, if anything, on the side of generosity", Joseph King at the same time had observed that the natives were said only to have "removed from their homes and holdings ... under the presence and menace of the military."² It appeared that the Government measures were not merely operating severely on the people, but that the Government itself was speculating in land. The Lagos Standard was so obsessed by these transactions that it indignantly declared that they all seemed to be "only another way of carrying out the measure sought to be introduced earlier by a Governor of Lagos, Sir Henry MacCallum, of substituting Crown Grants by a system of Quit-rents and leases from Government", which measure

1. H.C. Debs. 4s. Vol. 164, 1906, 311, 312. P. Jackson of Lagos to Elgin (encl. Petition) 10 Sept. 1906.

2. H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. XV, March 1910, 1035.

never became land, as the paper claimed, because of its "flagrant and self-evident injustice."¹

The dissatisfaction which greeted the subsequent administration of the 'Public Lands' Ordinance of 1876 became general opposition when new measures followed. On 20 September 1911, the Government of Lagos issued a Public Notice announcing "that the full Court of the Colony has held in cases recently decided that the Cession of the 6th day of August 1861, of the Port and Island of La_os with all the rights, profits, territories and appurtenances whatever thereunto belonging, was a cession of all lands not subject to pre-existing rights of private ownership."² Soon after, the Nigerian Times called public attention to this notice, pointing out correctly that it was a dangerous innovation aimed at an invasion of proprietary rights of both the Chiefs and private owners.³

As it was to be expected, the La_os Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society immediately got involved in this new situation. Its

1. La_os Standard, 22 May 1912
2. Published in Govt. Gazette, No. 68 of 20 Sept. 1911.
3. Nigerian Times, 3 Oct. 1911.

annual meeting of 7 November 1911 adopted the motions which Herbert Mac ulay had moved "in a very forcible speech" in which he pointed out the dangerous precedent aimed at by the Government Notice. From this time onwards, the Auxiliary Committee started active propaganda on the subject, expounding and interpreting the principles involved in the new policy of the Government, "so as to bring it home to the intelligent Comprehension of the people generally".¹

information

The Auxiliary had disseminated/on the Government measure among sections of the community in order to ensure cooperation. The people of Laos showed a spontaneous interest. Prince Eleko sent his sympathy and goodwill. Many Lao Chiefs and Moslem leaders were said to have attended some of the meetings called by the Auxiliary and gave support to the movement. Proceedings at meetings were conducted in the vernacular (that is ^{Ym}Yonba), and this succeeded almost immediately in giving wide-spread significance to the issues involved.²

1. J. Bright Davies to T. Buxton (Auxiliary Memo. encl.)
19 June 1912 MoS Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

2. Ibid.

When the Auxiliary secured solid support and felt sure of its case, it asked the Governor to receive a native deputation. Since Governor Egerton was about to proceed to England, he advised the Auxiliary to let the question stand over until the arrival of Lord Lugard. But as the Lagos natives regarded Lugard as "a perfect stranger to Southern Nigeria", the Committee of the Auxiliary thought it more expedient and advisable to approach F. Seton James, the Acting Governor, who already had years of experience in the Country. And since Acting Governor James at the interview with the deputation and in a subsequent correspondence justified the stand of the Government on the altar of public interest, the Lagos Auxiliary, therefore, memorialised the London Society, against the implication of the Foreshore Case decision of 22 April 1911. It pointed out that this decision was not binding to the Chiefs and people of Lagos because, as it rightly maintained, the Cession of Lagos by Dosunmu to the British Crown on 6 August 1861 was a cession only of his Sovereignty over the town and island of Lagos and not of property in land. The Auxiliary memorandum declared with disgust:

"The present land policy has created a menace in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria, where for fifty years after the cession, Her Majesty's Government never at any period under the treaty claimed the lands of Lagos Island and territories thereunto belonging as the property of the British Crown"¹

The criticism by the Auxiliary of the notice and policy of the Lagos Government was at the same time directed against the parent Society when it became known that some members of that Society were signatory to the famous letter to the Times. And with the appointment of the West African Lands Committee, the West African land question soon eclipsed the special one of Lagos. Members of the Lagos Auxiliary openly criticised the role of the parent Society in the whole crisis. Writing in August 1912, John P. Jackson, the proprietor of the Lagos Weekly Record, regretted that the Society was in any way associated with the proposal for the "Native Land Tenure System" which, according to him, "carried its meaning on its face" for "while it puts forward a plea for protecting the natives, yet it is an adroit scheme to substitute the native in ownership of his land; and while maintaining

1. Auxiliary Memo. of 19 June 1912, op. cit.

the outward or superficial form of the System, it destroys the essential condition of ownership to the deprivation of the native" Jackson was all the more angry with the Society for its awareness of the object of the proposal "since they had the Northern Nigerian System before them as an example". His condemnation of that system and the role of the Society was entire.

"There can be no question as to the injustice and iniquity of a system which deliberately deprives the native of the ownership of land which he has enjoyed from time immemorial and converts him into a tenant liable to pay rent for him for his own land. The native, ignorant as he is, can see through the speciousness of the system and thought the Society would have been alert as to the injustice sought to be inflicted upon him in a covert way."¹

If the Society's involvement in the parliamentary deputation to Harcourt and the letter to the Times was galling to the Auxiliary, the manner in which the Society worded its correspondence to the Auxiliary with regards to the land agitation in Britain was misunderstood and misinterpreted at the La os end. "The doubtful action of the Society in the matter," as Jackson called it, seemed to have convinced the Auxiliary that the parent

1. J.P. Jackson to T. Buxton, 21 Aug. 1912. MSS Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 252.

society, having involved itself in the conspiracy, was determined to keep them in the dark until a fact accomplish was achieved. Jackson went on:

itally "Instead of informing the latter (i.e. Auxiliary) at once what the proposal meant and what action they should take in defence of native rights, they simply informed them that a proposal was being made that would ~~virtually~~ concern the Native Land Tenure System in the West Coast of Africa, and that if they got any information on the proposal they should suspend action until they heard further from the Society. We can only interpret that action to mean that it was intended to keep the native in the dark and cause him to suspend any action until the proposal became an accomplished fact as it might have become seeing that only seven days inquiry was bestowed upon the Northern Nigerian System"

This new situation, complicated by misunderstanding and misrepresentations, found the Lagos population in confusion and dismay. If J. Osho Davies is to be believed, "the appointment of the Lands Committee at the instigation of Mr. Morel, without the faintest intimation of such a step to this outside world threw Lagos into a frenzied state, and when a few days after it became apparent that important members of the Society in London took part in forcing the hands of the Secretary of State in the matter, it drove terror into the hearts of many." As agitations were set in motion, taunts, like

1. J.P.. Jackson to T. Buxton, 21 Aug. 1912 MSS Brit Emp. S.22. G.252

"imperialist stooges", were said to have been ruthlessly hauled at those members of the Auxiliary who tried to defend the Society.¹

Some of the other observations made by Osho Davies, however, were worthy of attention, although the rest typified the misrepresentation, deliberate or not, which Morel's role was subjected to. For example, when he suggested that Morel recommended for West Africa the system he justly condemned in the Congo, "a gross and illogical conclusion", (to apply Davies' own reasoning) it was clear that Osho Davies either misunderstood the Morel thesis or deliberately tried to misrepresent it. However, when he suggested that although "it might be necessary for the Government to exercise some sort of control to prevent foolish Natives from alienating their lands to concessionaires from Europe or America", but that it was no reason why this ownership of native land should be taken away "under the unmeaning pretence that he does not own the land but only occupies it",² Davies had some justification. Moreover, he then cited the "Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance" to show that the Southern Nigeria Government

1. J. Osho Davies to T. Buxton, 23 Oct. 1912. (ibid).

2. Ibid.

already had control over the alienation of lands by natives to Europeans or alien Africans,¹ and if it was supposed that this law was not stringent enough, he said, the only way was to make it more stringent, and not "to take the ownership from them and vest it on the Governor absolutely, who might just turn round and barter those same lands away by leases". Davies was of the opinion that it was more of "confiscation" than "protection", "to deprive a man of his property and give it to some one else stronger than himself....", and expressed the hope that "the efforts of the Society will succeed to relieve us from the bugbear which like the pallour of death, overshadows all the British Dependencies in West Africa."²

The misguided indictment of the parent Society by the Lagos Auxiliary was a reflection of new tendencies

1. Vide Laws of the Colony of Southern Nigeria, Vol. 2 Section 3, P. 1188.
2. J. Osho Davies to Buxton, 23 Oct. 1912. Osho Davies cited the case of the lease of land to Levers Brothers of 311 sq. miles of Native land in the S.L. district, a transaction for which although there existed a concessions Court, "it was questionable", according to J.T. Roberts of the S.L. Auxiliary, "whether it was this Court that said the last word". (J.T. Roberts to Harris, 8 Oct. 1912). See Chap. 6. MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

within that Society. As has been indicated, the Society was genuinely interested in the movement to prevent alienation of land from the native tribes. The perennial creed of the APS had been its recognition of the primary importance to natives of their "rights to the land of which they are the prior occupants and its use in ways approved by them, or at any rate to so much thereof as may be requisite for their sustenance and prosperity under conditions not less favourable to them than those which they enjoyed while they were its sole owners."¹ Yet although its criticism of the Gold Coast Ordinance of 1897 was for a modification to prevent hardships to natives, and not in favour of alienation or abstract native rights favourable to such alienation,² the cumulative effect of the procedure followed by the Society was to help to render nugatory the efforts of the Colonial Office to protect tribal lands on the Gold Coast. As time went on, however, the necessity for Crown protection of native lands became obvious to members of the Society.

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1. H.R. Fox Bourne, The Claims of Uncivilized Races, op. cit. p. 6 See Chap. III.
 2. Aborigine's Friend, July 1897, Fox Bourne to CO, 21 June, 1897, CO 879/154.

Although there was still divergence of opinions on this crucial point (in particular the method of arriving at that desirable end), it was nevertheless obvious that the problem of alienation and Crown protection had become so urgent that within the Society it was felt that a declaration of policy had become imperative. John Harris expounded the case of his Society in a letter to Chris. Johnson, the Corresponding Secretary of the Lagos Auxiliary:

"Some steps must be taken to prevent the alienation of land from a whole tribe by a single individual, and therefore the only plan which at present seems to us satisfactory, is that of declaring such land the property of the State, but by the word "State", we should mean the ultimate organisation of that State to which we look forward. As it has been represented to us on Committee, unless these steps are taken now, when we arrive at that date when we have more or less representative government, the natives will find that all their lands have been conceded away from them for a trumpery return....."¹

He told Johnson that the Society felt itself ^{justified} in urging a Commission of Enquiry in Britain, "as it will be very important in bringing the whole question to the front."²

1. Harris to Chris Johnson, 20 May 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

2. Ibid.

But while Harris was ready to see the Society support a policy of State ownership of land, he desired that declaration of policy to go parri passu with certain constitutional changes. He nurtured a strong feeling that British rule in West Africa had been "so autocratic that a larger share in the government of the Colonies - the Gold Coast and Nigeria-- should be given other communities." These views, which he was to also express to the Colonial Office, were embodied in his communication with Wedgewood:

"There are today three sections, Government, Natives and White Merchants; to be strictly equitable they should be given proportionate interest with a supreme Governor possessing the veto of legislation. We have probably not yet arrived at the stage when this is practical or advisable, but conditions today are so disproportionate that they are causing a good deal of unrest and dissatisfaction"¹

He agreed with Wedgewood "that the alienation of land must be subject to the sanction of the Crown," but insisted that "the Crown, as such, should in its ideal capacity be representative of the entire community, whose first duty is that of safe-guarding the rights of the whole colony". Quite appropriately, Harris had not

1. Harris to Wedgewood, 31 May 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 19. D 3/5. See Chap. IV.

forgotten that an uncontrolled Crown, represented by the Government officials "on the spot", had "on one occasion at least within recent times subjected the natives to considerable hardships, not for concessions, but to make a race-course primarily for the benefit of Government officials....."¹

Although the parent Committee now knew that some members of the Auxiliary were championing a cause opposed to theirs², they continued to maintain an urbane regard for the expressed views of the Auxiliary as if to lead its members to the true policy in a fit of absence of mind. In July 1912, for example, Buxton told the Auxiliary that his Committee was "very glad to find that the policy which you urge is on the same lines as we have followed in this matter."³ Again, in August of the

1. Harris to Wedgewood, 31 May 1912 D 3/5,
2. For example, Harris disbelieved the evidence of Lloyd Harrison that all natives and all native chiefs were "too wary and not easily deceived by unscrupulous Europeans". Harris told him that the Society was receiving entirely different information on how "natives all over the British Empire are being robbed of their lands". Harris to Lloyd Harrison, 5 Aug. 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.
3. T. Buxton to J. Bright Davies, 15 July 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

same year, Harris told F. Lloyd Harrison that the policy at the Society was exactly the one upon which the Auxiliary decided¹ Though mutual mistrust prevailed between London and Lagos, they managed to compose their differences by agreeing on a three-point policy which formed the basis of future agitation. They wanted no interference with native tenure. They maintained that tribal lands must be safeguarded. Finally, and most important, both believed and preached the idea that native witnesses must appear before the Lands Committee, otherwise any decisions arrived at would rest on a basis entirely inequitable.²

Thenceforward, the Society brought pressure to bear on the Colonial Office on the importance of obtaining native witnesses before formulating any policy on land. On 6 June 1912 at a deputation to Harcourt the Society had proposed that it endorsed the views embodied in the radical letter to the Times "on the understanding that the steps taken would only apply to tribal lands and on the vital condition that representative natives would be heard either locally or in London as

1. Harris to Lloyd Harrison, 5 Aug. 1912. Copy ibid.

2. Harris to Lloyd Harrison, 1 July 1912. Copy ibid.

witnesses".¹ It then suggested to Digby, the Chairman of the Land Committee, that native representation was a necessity, even volunteering to foot the cost this would entail if the Colonial governments would not.² Although, as Buxton claimed, Harcourt had earlier indicated his assent to these proposals "it now appeared that there were powerful influences at work against this course".³ Apart from the inevitable opposition from local officials, the Colonial Office was already very angry with the Society when on 11 June of the same year, the Society sent the Colonial Office a letter it proposed to send to the Auxiliaries.⁴ Since this letter tended to prejudge the recommendations of the Committee, which Society claimed might redound disadvantageously to the natives, the Colonial Office regarded it as tendentious. Charles Strachey furiously minuted: "The proposed letter to West Africa ~~Auxiliaries~~

1. Minutes, Committee, AS APS, 5 July 1912, Item 2192, E2/13, Vol. VIII

2. Buxton to Digby, 27 June 1912, D 1/11.

3. Buxton to Sir. W. N. M. Geary, 24 June 1912, D 1/11.

4. AS. APS to CO, 11 June 1912, CO 554/10.

is most objectionable. It is the outcome of ignorance and pessimism ... this Society has no influence whatever except with the press and for them to offer advice on the subject is ridiculous."¹ A moderate official added: "...The letter is ill-informed but well-meaning."² Harcourt agreed with Strachey: "I saw Mr. Harris yesterday; gave him a dressing down and told him the letter was mischevious and silly."³

Harris was so worried by the apparent withdrawal of the promise by Harcourt that he tried to rally other forces outside the Colonial Office. He mistakenly believed that Holt would give support to the idea of native delegation, and wrote to him:

"I met Harcourt privately at a later date, and in a conversation I saw that he was seriously disturbed about his promise, and it appeared to me that the permanent officials - or some other influences - had been at work against natives coming to this country. This is rather confirmed by a letter just received from the Colonial Office, and therefore unless we can exert private pressure on the C.O. authorities, they will do this thing without consulting other than "nominated" native witnesses."⁴

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1. Minute of 18 June 1912 by C. Strachey on *ibid.*
 2. Minute of 19 June 1912, (*ibid.*)
 3. Minute of 21 June 1912 by L. Harcourt (*ibid.*)
 4. Harris to Holt, 3 July, 1912, 10/5, JHP.

Holt believed that some of the educated natives were land speculators and was not sympathetic to their coming to London to give evidence. On 4 July, Buxton asked Philip Morrell, one of the signatories to the letter to the Times and a Liberal Member of Parliament, to get Harcourt to "publicly absolve himself" from the report then current that he had withdrawn his pledge by giving the Committee itself the onus of decision on the matter. He added that if this forecast was finally proved to be correct, it would "shake confidence in present Colonial Minister"; and then warned: "It seems to me that he is sowing to the wind, and he must not be surprised if the inevitable whirl-wind results."¹

Although it had become public knowledge that Morel himself was bitterly opposed to the idea of natives coming to Britain to give evidence, Harris recognised his power and tried to influence him to support the Society's demand. Apart from the equity involved, Harris felt that it would allay the fears of the natives and mollify the disaffection which was already prevalent.

1. Buxton to P. Morrell, 4 July 1912. Copy, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

He cordially solicited these points in a long letter to Morel:

"No one could more honestly believe in the principles of protecting tribal lands by declaring the Crown as trustee, than I do, but if this is done without giving the natives an opportunity of expressing their opinions, it is illiberal and unjust. Apart from equity, such action will cause widespread unrest and disloyalty to the Crown. There is nothing to lose by three representatives of each Colony being given the opportunity of representing the views of the native community. They, like all sections of the community, love to be heard; the chance to express themselves acts as a safety valve. The natives of West Africa in Britain are not the type to come before the Commission - mostly students seeking their education. I want the man who is already educated, artificially or by nature. Of course, no native deputation would ^{do} in the eyes of the native without a legal man (but it will be only one from each Colony). I want to see that old farmer woman from Abeokuta to give the Committee a good deal of "farmer" knowledge, which (e) don't find in books; Pearse of Lagos who is above all things a native merchant; those hard-working fellows in the cocoa farms of the Gold Coast. I should not like P.A. Renner B.L., and "Legal adviser" to various Gold Coast Concessions."¹

These arguments might have impressed any person with middle-of-the-road views on land; but to Morel whose paternalism was virtually a religious conviction, they seemed largely irrelevant.²

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1. Harris to Morel, July 1912, F.8/Harris EDMP.
 2. On 30 Aug. 1912, Harris also tried to gain the support of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, but that body was not interested in the question of native evidence.

The Society fell back on the Colonial Office. A letter of 9 July 1912 repeated the arguments in favour of native witnesses giving evidence either on the spot or in Britain, emphasising the wish particularly of the Gold Coast Auxiliary to be heard.¹ Strachey once more opposed the suggestion: "This Society is very anxious to select our witnesses for us - a thing they should not be allowed to do, especially as we know (from native witnesses already examined) that they have very little influence outside Accra. There is no reason at all to show the desirability of hearing native witnesses. It would be to break open an open door....."² The Society then wanted an interview with Harcourt,³ but was told that this would serve no useful purpose.⁴

1. AS. APS to CO. 9 July 1912, CO 554/10.

2. Minute of 16 July 1912 by Charles Strachey on *ibid.*

3. Buxton to CO. 15 July 1912 MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19,D6/1.
Buxton to CO. 18 Oct. 1912 *ibid.*, also in MSS Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

4. CO to Harris, 17 July 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22.G. 25
CO to Harris, 22 July 1912 *ibid.*
CO to Buxton, 29 Oct. 1912 *ibid.*

Perplexed at the attitude of the Colonial Office and frightened by the idea of pleading non possumus to the Auxiliaries, the Society then wrote a detailed statement of its points of view. It informed the Colonial Office that because of the serious uneasiness which was entertained by the natives, as to the intentions of the Government with regard to land, the present procedure might increase that tension. It pointed out that this misconception and uneasiness was already so prevalent that the British Commissioner at Abeokuta felt it imperative to make a public statement assuring the Egba people of the genuineness of Government's intention in the presence of the Alake. It might not be possible for the whole body of the Lands Committee to visit West Africa, yet the Society felt that some of its members might do so. One of the chief reasons why the Liquor Traffic Commission commanded so large a measure of public confidence, the Society claimed, was that its members personally visited the Colonies; and though the Liquor Traffic was important, the Land question seemed "incalculably more important in its bearing on the social

system of the native tribes of West Africa." Criticising at the same time the official decision to collect local evidence through the various District Commissioners and other colonial officials, the Society declared:

"The method of obtaining evidence locally would have been unrestricted in its scope and carried out by a Committee of men representative of all sections of the community. Such a procedure would effectively banish misconception and command a measure of confidence which would render both legislation and administration a much easier or more acceptable task."¹

This argument was powerful; but Harcourt was not yet convinced. He informed the Society that "it is not practicable for the Committee to visit West Africa" since endeavour would be made "to arrive at the facts", and that the Committee would use whatever means it considered best adapted for the purpose.² Although the Colonial Office, up to this point, had not acceded to the Society's main demand, it was indirectly influenced by its information. At the behest of the Society, the Colonial Office had sent telegrams to the higher officials in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, telling

Copy

1. Ad. APS to CO, 28 Aug. 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19.D6/1
2. CO to AS.APS, 10 Sept. 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22.G.252

them to instruct their subordinates to explain to native witnesses that the Government was anxious to prevent natives losing the rights over the land which they possessed by native law and custom, and that the enquiry was to ascertain what that custom was.¹

Neither Travers Buxton nor John Harris was satisfied with this limited success. They decided to undermine the Committee by boycotting it. When they were called upon to appear before the Committee they declined; Harris, because he "was not in possession of any evidence which would justify appearing before the Committee", although he held "strong opinions on the subject";² and Buxton, because he was "not in a position to give personal evidence of any value."³ Rather than give any evidence which might compromise the Auxiliaries' demands, the Society felt, it called upon its Parliamentary Committee to the apparent inadequacies of the sources from which native testimony was being drawn⁴ and threatened the Colonial Office with

1. CO to Buxton, 24 Sept. 1912 (ibid.)

2. Harris to Batterbee, 25 Sept. 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19. D3/7.

3. Buxton to Batterbee, 25 Sept. 1912, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.19, D1/11.

4. Buxton to Quarco-Pore, 8 Oct. 1912. MSS. Brit. Emp. S22.G.252, 210.

parliamentary questions on the subject.¹ The Colonial Office treated this information with amused scorn: "These people have, I think, put themselves out of court by refusing to give evidence before the Committee. To speak of 'being refused a hearing at the Colonial Office' after declining to give evidence seem to me scarcely honest. It is impossible to continue this interminable correspondence, and I would merely acknowledge receipt. If the Society proceed to put questions in Parliament the S.S. can point out that Messrs. Buxton and Harris were invited to give Evidence, but they declined to do so...."²

However, at the beginning of 1913 the official mind began to change. Rather than embarrass the Society by putting questions in Parliament (since its two officials had boycotted the Committee) members of the Parliamentary Committee strove to achieve an accommodation through private meetings with Harcourt. Through the instrumentality of Sir William Byles, an active parliamenta

1. AS APS to CO, Nov. 1912, CO 554/10.

2. Minute of 8 Nov. 1912 by H.J.R. *ibid.*

member of the Society, a private interview was arranged for Harcourt and Harris. Although Harcourt, at that meeting regretted the tone of the Society's letters to his Office, he nevertheless said that he had no reason to complain of its attitude on native questions and expressed sympathy with its work.¹ Unable to convince Harcourt to receive a Society deputation, ~~Harcourt~~ tried another manoeuvre. He asked Harcourt whether he would consider the reception of a deputation after the Departmental Committee had presented its report and before any legislation was brought forward, to include some natives from West Africa. Harcourt must have assessed the implications of acceding to this request. It would imply that he was a party to the same charge of "pessimism", as regards the final report, with which the Colonial Office had taunted the Society. It meant prolonging the agitation after the report might have been issued; and then allowing natives from the West Coast to stand between an authoritative report and immediate official implementation of its recommendations. Harcourt now agreed

1. Minutes, sub-Committee, AS APS, 3 Jan. 1913, E 2/13, Vol. VIII.

that Africans might appear before the Committee. He considered that "the object of the Society would be better served by the attendance before the Committee of witnesses, either European or native, who may have information which they desire to impart, rather than by postponing the expression of their views until the Committee had issued its report."¹ Elated by this achievement, the Society immediately advised the local Auxiliaries to send native witnesses before the Committee, insisting, however, that the "gentlemen chosen for this purpose should represent different cultural interests and possibly someone possessing legal knowledge on the question of land tenure."²

The reactions of the various Auxiliaries reflected the peculiarities of their localities. The Gold Coast Auxiliary had recently passed a vote of confidence on the London Society but it still felt uncomfortable with its role in the appointment of the Lands Committee. Its scepticism of the good

1. Buxton to Quarco-Pome, 20 Jan. 1913. MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 210, 252.

2. Ibid.

intentions of the parent Society was reinforced by local propaganda. Always pointing at Section 2, Para. 5 of the Auxiliary Constitution which prevented the Auxiliary from communicating with the local Government on vital issues, the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society and the Native Institutions Conservation Society, impressed the Gold Coast natives with the impotency of the Auxiliary.¹ Many members of that Auxiliary became disillusioned with the parent Society, and either joined the other two vociferous movements or championed individual causes. Finally on 7 May 1913, the Gold Coast Auxiliary, referring to the efforts of members of the Forest Deputation, told the Society that it had decided not to send its own delegation since it would "not be advisable for our auxiliary to send another Deputation in a matter where the first Deputation and the Native authorities themselves have already delivered themselves in the light of what they knew"² This virtually nullified the vote of confidence already referred to.

1. Quarco-Pome to Buxton, 12 Sept. 1912. MSS (Ibid).

2. Quarco-Pome to Buxton, 8 May 1913. (Ibid).

Although the Sierra Leone Auxiliary showed a fitful interest in the Lands Committee,¹ it was Southern Nigeria that really witnessed a recrudescence of discontent over a visit to London. According to W.A. Ross, the Resident at Oyo and Ibadan, some "of the African gentlemen were working for a free trip to England and were furious that the evidence would be taken locally." Apart from the Auxiliary, Ross reported that a certain clique of the People's Union, aided by J.P. Jackson (who had command of the Union's funds) took a trip to Yorubaland "where they misrepresented everything." They were alleged to have wired Andrew Thomas, a prominent Yoruba, asking him "to come up and help them through Ibadan and Oyo," but he had refused since he did not approve of their mission. Many of them refused to give evidence locally despite repeated warnings.²

There can be no doubt that, as always, the land question gave the local politicians an opportunity to whip

1. The S.L. Auxiliary sent a certain Mr. Leigh to represent them at the Lands Committee, but the Home Society told J.M. Roberts that they did not see this man.
MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G.245, G. 252.
2. W.A. Ross to Morel, 7 May 1913, F 9/P-S, EDMP.

up emotions in the uninformed and to collect funds, which were diverted to other uses. Through the initiative of Herbert Macaulay, he was alleged to be "now bent on exploiting the Itjekris for funds", the Lagos Auxiliary wrote to the chiefs of the central province asking that money be donated for the land delegation. When it is realised that each chief was asked to donate as much as £170, so as to enable the agitators in addition, as they claimed, to press the Government to abolish even sanitary laws, some of which were in reality made for their own good, it could then be wondered to what extent unscrupulous tactics could be used by the educated to deceive the unwary. Dr. O. Sapara expressed his dismay to Morel in the letter revealing these facts:

"I am sure that neither the Aborigines' Parent Committee nor the Commission require anything but loiterers and neither will they sanction any movement of exploitation for a few to get money to spend by deceiving the illiterate people of those provinces"¹

Dr. Sapara's denunciations of this 'movement of exploitation' was a reflection of the plethora of

1. Dr. O Sapara to Morel, 29 May 1913, F 9/P-S, EDM.P. Dr. Sapara, Cguntola Odunbaku (1861-1935). I.S.O., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin.), F.R.I.P.H. (Glasgow); graduate in 1895; a Lagosian.

dissensions which had rent the Lagos Auxiliary¹ and which the land agitation merely promoted. Shocked by this malaise which had brought the prestige of the Auxiliary to its nadir, Dr. Sapara, who was specially antipathetic to Macaulay, wrote dolefully in the same letter to Morel:

"Besides Mr. Herbert Pearse and Da Rocha, there's hardly any one in this Auxiliary Society at present worthy of anything and in the interest of the good name of the Parent Committee a thorough investigation ought to be made as to how the funds were got up; and the Auxiliary be reorganised; for no one who has a reputation to lose will ally himself with the Auxiliary as it now stands"²

The agitation of some members of the Auxiliary for a visit to London, their misrepresentation of the true

1. It is not proposed here to go into the details of the schism within the Lagos Auxiliary. Though Agbebi and Macaulay did not always agree, they seemed to have found a mutual target in Sapara Williams who had probably tried and failed to convert the Auxiliary into a political forum favourable to himself. Also having represented the Govt. as prosecutor in certain cases, 'nationalist' factions led by Macaulay and Agbebi accused him of being 'unpatriotic'. The land question which provided an opportunity for members to quarrel over funds necessarily promoted the tendency towards dissolution. Agbebi announced the dissolution of the Auxiliary in Sept. 1913, but it was reconstituted by moderate elements in both camps in 1914.
2. Dr. O. Sapara to Morel, 29 May 1913, F 9/P-S, EDMF.

intention of the British Government and Morel's ideas, forced Morel to the conclusion that the native opposition was not based on genuinely disinterested motives. He thus wrote to the editor of the Weekly News;

"The persons who have distorted this recommendation and erected upon it a grotesque edifice of their own invention are, in the main, persons whose interest it is that every African should be a law unto himself with regard to the land of his country, and that chiefs should for a temporary consideration be permitted, and encouraged, to barter away the heritage of their people for generations"¹

This was merely a continuation of Morel's self-defence against the venomous and persistent attacks and misrepresentations he had suffered at the hands of some educated natives on the West Coast. A little before, he had made a stronger defence and restatement of his beliefs in the form of an open letter to J.S. Davies, an Assistant Postmaster-General of Freetown, and a keen correspondent of his. It was a philosophical and historical reappraisal of the situation in West Africa vis-a-vis the current trend of economic imperialism.

According to Morel, certain events had forced the land question to the front-rank of problems pertaining

1. Weekly News, 23 Oct. 1913.

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to West Africa. The previous decade had seen an enormous advance in the activity and in the centralised character of modern industrial effort and enterprise. Mechanical invention, concentration and export of capital, increased facilities of transport, had revolutionalized the conditions of organized industry. These had brought the tropics, especially West African tropics, to the nerve-centres of capital, and in so doing, they had placed the tropics within closer reach of the operations of capitalistic combination. Quick returns, impatience of delay, competition ever keener and sterner, had become the order of the day. The power of organised capital to influence the policy of governments and the destinies of peoples, through personal friendships and party allegiance, were never so potent and far-reaching. These phenomena, Morel claimed, created a new situation for the inhabitants of the tropical regions of the globe, and especially West Africa owing to its proximity to Europe. "For the first time, West Africa was brought within the vortex of these immense forces of the modern economic world." And since Morel

believed that the peoples of British protected West African Colonies were by "themselves powerless to arrest, to control, to define, or to regulate" these irresistible developments, the need for legislation was therefore more insistent than ever.¹

In this crisis, Morel said, the educated West African had precisely one of three choices to make. If he chose, he could "stand aside, not troubling to think; too apathetic to interest himself in anything which goes beyond his own doorsteps; too conceited to imagine that he has anything to learn; too afflicted by jealousy of his neighbour to be capable of common action, too timid to raise his voice lest he be accused of pandering to authority." Morel was of the opinion that if the educated native chose this course he would rule himself out of account as a factor to be considered either for good or ill for this ^{would} amount to deliberately choosing the part of the drone. On the other hand,

1. Vide the letter entitled The Future of the Peoples of West Africa in Relation to the forces of European Capital and Industry, with particular reference to the occupancy and Enjoyment of the Land. (London, Aug. 1912) Pp. 22 - 3.

he could allow himself to be bought into acquiescence and support for a policy whose promoters would cast him contemptuously aside "like a soiled glove" when he had served their turn; and he would then be gulled into opposing, through ingrained suspicion of "Government", the very elements in British official and unofficial life which stood between his race and economic servitude. Morel told West Africans that if they chose this course, they would strengthen the hands of those who would reduce the West African races, not by violence, but by economic processes, into land-less serfs; and then alienate and discourage their true friends. A third alternative, which Morel championed, was for the educated native to rise to the occasion, force himself to look the position in the face, and to give outspoken, unstinted and active encouragement to every measure and influence which would tend to check and restrain the forces which sought to undermine the productive energies of the West African peoples. He believed that by selecting this course, "The educated native could contribute materially in securing that the inevitable development of modern industrial effort should not be prosecuted at the expense of the future liberties, free expansion and progressive

advance of the West African peoples"¹

This powerful letter was circulated throughout West Africa, but not before Morel had been thoroughly maligned. Even those who had not seen the letter imagined that Morel advocated opposite policies to those which it contained. For example, even Dr. Obadiah Johnson, an old friend and correspondent of Morel's, had written "a long screed" to Morel, "full of inaccuracies, suspicions and absurd assumptions", accusing him of having given advice to the Imperial Government to deprive the whole of West African peoples of their lands, and then citing Morel's open letter to Davies as proof.²

There can be no apter proof of the misrepresentations which seemed to pain Morel greatly. Of this villifying slander published against him, the "most odious remarks" were made by the Lagos Standard and Strachey sympathised with him "very much over this affair."³ Writing to Morel in April, 1913, the Commissioner of Lands for Southern Nigeria, C.W. Alexander, observed that Morel's "efforts to put land matters on a sound

1. Ibid. p. 43.

2. Morel to Dr. Henry Strachan, 6 Jan. 1913, F.9/P-S, EDMP.

3. Strachey to Morel, 10 Oct. 1913, F.9/P-S, EDMP.

footing" were not greatly appreciated by the "trousered men".¹

It would seem that there were three main schools of thought in Lagos on the Land Question. According to Dr. Strachan, a Government medical official and for many years member of the Legislative Council, there were those who did not want the British Government to have the slightest power in dealing with the matter of land tenure. Secondly, there were those who while admitting the advantage of having an independent body to settle disputed land questions, however, had the usual mistrust, and thought that if that body should be the Government, it meant that the Government would take their land entirely. A third school felt that the Natives should have the power, while due and adequate safeguards should be instituted, for selling or leasing land for worthy projects to desirable persons.²

Dr. Strachan confessed his sympathy with the last school. His view was that the Native could never

1. C. J. Alexander to Morel, 2 April 1913. F.9/A-B, L.D.P.

2. Dr. Strachan to Morel, 12 Dec. 1913, F. 9/P-S, L.D.P.

utilize the whole of the vast, unused tracts of land in Lagos, not to talk of the interior. Moreover, he felt that "hite" energy, enterprise and capital, would change the area into plantations of cocoa, cotton, corn, coconuts etc., while giving employment to deserving person, "and advancing the progress of the country." He thought that the alienation of an unduly large territory could be guarded against and adequate amount of land preserved for the use of the natives without entirely preventing the establishment of plantations by Europeans..."¹

Dr. Strachan's "progressive" views seemed to have tempered Morel's idealism, though he never abandoned the basis of his creed. He now saw "little or no objection to the lease of land under proper safeguards, and with two provisos" - namely, that the lease was not for too long a period; secondly, that it was not for too large an area. But as to the effects of an unrestricted sale of land either by natives to non-natives, or between natives themselves, Morel was too impressive by two experiences to abandon his original premise. He always had in mind "those evils the regulation of which has cost us such an

1. Dr. Strachan to Morel, 12 Dec. 1913, F.p/ EDMP.

immense amount of trouble in India and which have borne so hardly upon the Indian peasant". Under such a system, he said, the land had passed from the hands of the people into the hands of a restricted number of landlords. The result was that "the independent cultivator sank to the position of a hired labourer and the health and vigour and economic independence of the mass of the people were irretrievably compromised."¹

But it was the British experience which was most telling. Morel described the situation to Dr. Strachan:

"By processes covering centuries of operation the small yeoman farmer has practically disappeared from English soil, and today all the three political parties in the State are devising remedies to cope with the situation which has thus arisen. 'Back to the Land' has indeed become one of the battle cries of all the political parties; they all have their different rostrums to deal with it; but they all admit that the evil is a pressing one which must be tackled."²

Morel then pointed out that in Lagos Colony, according to the information he had received, it was becoming obvious that with few exceptions, the cocoa plantations were not run by cultivators in their own right but by

1. Morel to Dr. Strachan, 6 Jan. 1913, Copy F 9/P-S.LDMP.

2. Ibid.

labourers working for native landlords. With this discovery, he associated these African landlords with those who did not want the British Government to have the slightest power in dealing with land tenure since they wished to foster their own interest as against those of the mass. He pointed out the danger in the same letter to Dr. Strachan:

"If they had their way, why, the whole land of the country would pass into alien hands, or into the hands of a few rich men without any difficulty; and the native would be reduced to a landless labourer working for a wage It would mean the entire collapse of native polity, and the shutting down of the native horizon for good and all..."¹

As Morel was writing to Strachan, the Nigerian land delegation was getting prepared for the journey to Britain. On 31 May 1913, a group of thirteen Nigerians,²

1. Ibid.
2. The delegation was intended to include the following though some of them did not ultimately travel: Shobogun Lisa Kesi and Adegboyeyea Edun for Abeokuta; Sanusi Ekerin for Ibadan; Chief Risawe and Charles Turton for Ilesha; Fashe and Agbonlefa for Ijebu-ode; Princes Bassey Duke Ephraim IX and James Lyo Ita for Calabar; Chief Frederick Sunday Jaja for Opobo; Chief Herbert Jumbo and Chief Walter Banigo for Bonny; Chief Charles Inko Goodhead for New Calabar. There were others from Brass, Oyo, Ife and Lagos. See Buxton to Batterbee, 14 April 1913, MSS. Brit. Emp. S.22. G. 252.

clad in vivid multi-coloured robes, turbans and fez caps, arrived at Southampton by the liner Eleanor Noerman.¹ They had come to give evidence before the Lands Committee.² According to the Daily News and Leader, they were "very quiet, dignified and courteous, but not inclined to talk", while Adegboyega Edun, Secretary to the Egba United Government was "a man of fine culture, has a presence and bearing which is superior, though friendly enough, and an enunciation possessed by not too many Londoners."³ Since Morel was against the whole idea of the Africans coming to give evidence in Britain, particularly as the impression was given that the delegation was led by his old enemy and "most dangerous man", Adegboyega Edun, the African Mail tried as much as possible to damage the delegation in the British eyes; a state of affairs against which Harris and Buxton complained to Batterbee, the Secretary of the Lands Committee.⁴

It must be pointed out, however, that Morel's

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1. Daily Chronicle, 31 May 1913.
 2. African World, 5 July 1913.
 3. Daily News and Leader, 31 May 1913.
 4. Harris and Buxton to Batterbee, 2 June 1913, MSS. Brit. Emp. S. 22. G. 252.

campaigns against Edun, in particular, were not unjustified. It was Edun who had engineered much of the misrepresentation of Morel's views to Southern Nigerians. He had circulated a letter alleging that the British Government wanted to take away native land, and that Morel was in the way of this movement. Since Morel was already in the Committee and would not be expected to air his views openly on these questions, he had quickly appealed to Harcourt to help him dismiss Edun's strategem. He did this in an almost tearful note to Harcourt:

"I now take the liberty of sending you herewith copy of a letter by M.A. Edun, Secretary to the Alake of Abeokuta, which has been and is being extensively circulated in all the native newspapers in British West Africa. This letter is substantially to the effect that the suggestion of transferring the ownership of land from the Native Communities to the Crown and of dispossessing the Natives of their land, was made to you by me, either in my personal capacity or as a member of the West African Lands Committee.

"I am necessarily precluded from dealing with the specific personal charge at present and I may be so precluded for some time to come. Its persistence, meantime places me in a somewhat invidious position and is calculated to throw doubts upon my impartiality as a member of the West African Lands Committee.

"No one knows better than yourself how wholly devoid of the very shadow of foundation is this charge, and a simple word from you would be

enough to dispose of it."¹

Harcourt was understandably surprised that Morel's position had been misunderstood and misrepresented through the "misplaced ingenuity" of his critics, and found it "difficult to believe that anyone familiar with your record of work in defence of Native Rights could entertain for a moment the notion that such a suggestion could have come from you!"² Edun, however, thought otherwise. He was still convinced that Morel was the fons et origo of the land question. He opined: "There was no land question in Southern Nigeria until he created one; and the 'widespread misapprehension' he complains of is but a ripple of the agitation he has set in motion."³

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1. Morel to L. Harcourt, 20 Oct. 1913, Copy F 9/E-L, EDMP.
Harcourt, Lewis, 1st Viscount Harcourt (1863-1922), politician, Son of Sir. Wm. Harcourt, the statesman; Private Sec. to father, 1881-6; 1892-5, 1895-1904; Liberal M.P., Rossendale div. of Lancashire, 1904-16; helped to found Free Trade Union; 1st Commissioner of works, 1905-10; With Viscount Lsher founded London Museum 1911; Sec. of State for Colonies, 1910-15; returned to office of works, 1915-16; Viscount 1917.
 2. Harcourt to Morel, 22 Oct. 1913, F 9 /EDMP.
 3. A. Edun to the Editor of the African World, Oct. 1913.

This personal factor apart, two other reasons accounted for Morel's continued hostility to the Delegation. There was ample evidence from Lagos that many natives there saw the idea of a delegation to London as useless if not a huge holiday. The Nigerian Chronicle felt it was no use going to Britain to corroborate evidence which was already overwhelming; and in any case, it was not too much worried since the delegation did not represent Lagos.¹ Moreover, when they arrived in Britain, the delegates gave the impression that they had come to protest against some wrong rather than to give evidence before a fact-finding Commission. Although John Harris would not share this view, abundant evidence demonstrates this attitude. Almost every paper which reported the visit gave the view, undenied by the delegates, that Edun had led a protest movement to London.²

But Morel had prepared the minds of the British public for such an eventuality. From the expressed views of his opponents before they arrived, he

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1. See R f. to the Nigerian Chronicle criticism in African Mail of 23 May 1913.
 2. The A.I., 25 July 1913 in order to prove this quotes extracts from almost all the newspapers which had interviewed Edun.

knew what to expect when they arrived. He had, therefore, forestalled Edun and his company with a shattering editorial in the African Mail:

"The idea has been sedulously propagated that the appointment of the Committee was a preliminary step to the appropriation of all the land of West Africa by the Crown, a course falsely stated to have been recommended by certain members of the Committee. Some genuine alarm has been occasioned, and some of the attacks upon the Committee have been undoubtedly due to honest cre ulity and ingrained suspicion. But it is difficult to resist the belief that influences of another kind, and with quite other ends in view, have been at work. It is a matter of common knowledge that the break-up of the old family and communal system of tenure in the territories now known as Lagos Colony, has enabled individual native interests to acquire land at the expense of the native community in general, and that a small but active and noisy group of natives who have profitted by these transactions have been working for sometime to carry this disintegrating influence to the great centres of the Western Province. Any conceivable action of the British Government calculated to arrest this proceeds would, naturally be resented by this group, and no doubt they and their friends in the Gold Coast, with similar fish to fry, hope to paralyse such action - assuming it to be in contemplation - by appeals to prejudice and passion¹"

The misguided publicity engineered by Edun notwithstanding, the Delegation behaved with dignity while in Britain. They gave their evidence before the Committee. They received great hospitality from the Anti-Slavery and Aborigine's Protection Society which prior to

1. African Mail, 10 Jan. 1913. On 3 Oct. 1913, the A.M. alleged that Edun, like others, were involved in land transactions, having leased lands to foreigners on behalf of the N.U.G. in a manner that was questionable.

their arrival had arranged luncheons and educational visits for them.¹ After visiting such industrial centres as Birmingham, Sheffield and Liverpool under the charge of John Harris, they sailed for Lagos on 2 July 1913.²

The importance of the native agitation and delegation may be indicated only in passing here. Apart from the assurances of good intentions they received from the British Government, the idea of a delegation, to be repeated in 1920 and in 1947, served to engender national consciousness.³ Just as the 1913 delegation had drawn representation from far and wide in Southern Nigeria, that of 1920 was to draw from the whole of West Africa. The 1947 delegation also drew representation from all parts of Nigeria. Like the later delegation, however, the internal recriminations which preceded and followed that of 1913 were symptomatic of the mutual loss of confidence in the financial administration of the

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1. Minutes, sub-committee, AS APS, 2 May 1913 item 2319, E 2/13, Vol. VIII
 2. Minutes, sub-committee, AS APS, 4 July 1913, item 2344 (ibid.)
 3. The NCBWA sent a delegation in 1920, and the NCVC in 1947.

movement which sponsored it. The unsavoury diatribes between that idiosyncratic figure, Dr. Mojola Agbebi, and the huge political "wizard of Kirston Hall", Herbert Macaulay, whose private and public image was by no means unquestionable, ultimately generated a schism which led to the dissolution of the Lagos Auxiliary until it was salvaged again. The example of unscrupulous misrepresentation to the illiterate masses by selfish and elitist agitators in a bid to collect money which was later never accounted for, serves much to off-set their claim as defenders of native Society. The educational benefits to the delegation notwithstanding (or even because of it), the whole visit seemed to be what the Nigerian Chronicle concluded, "a big holiday".

From the Minutes of Evidence and the Report of the West African Lands Committee, it would appear that many of the views of Morel and his friends were upheld by most of the witnesses and the Committee itself. During the proceedings, Morel had tried to establish his case for the necessity for ultimate protective control by the Government of the land.¹ Although witnesses like Caseley

1. Minutes of Evidence: African (West) No. 1047; Morel - Belfield Q. 133; Morel - J.J. Thornburn, Q. 1620; 1832.

Hayford stubbornly denied this necessity (to the extent that the Chairman concluded that no amount of cross-examination would convince him, "whatever the right or wrong of his case might be");¹ Many others confirmed that there were grounds for Morel's fears and that some of his projects were practicable. A.G. Boyle, the Colonial Secretary of Southern Nigeria, told the Committee that "a large number of educated natives" speculated "in land values to the detriment of the more uneducated natives."² He also pointed out that in Abeokuta there was objection to legislation "because several of the leading members would wish to have individual tenure and"not due to the motive of desiring to have greater security of tenure/farms"^{in their}, but for speculative ends."³ To Morel's Conservative idea of using the Alafin to establish the basis of a Land Act for Yombaland, Boyle did not think it would be terribly difficult to get the Yoruba chiefs (with the influence of the Alafin) to admit this necessity, but warned that

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1. African (West) No. 1047. Digby - C. Hayford. Q. 859.
 2. Evidence No. 1047: Morel - Boyle. Q. 2078.
 3. Evidence No. 1047: Boyle: Q. 2232-3.

"there are a certain number of people who, on account of their selfish ends would not like it, and would do their utmost not to have it."¹ He was referring to the school of educated natives who wanted no interference with the then land situation.

The observations and recommendations of the Committee also virtually supported almost everything the pressure-groups had been agitating for, basing these conclusions mainly on the evidence before them. Except in some parts of Gambia and Sierra Leone (where English law existed), it concluded that natives should have the benefits of native laws and customs.² Secondly, it established some leading characteristics of Native customs on land. Thus the loose talk that there was land without owners was discredited by the Committee, after citing the evidence of some witnesses, as out of place with native custom and contrary to all native

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1. Evidence No. 1047: Morel - Boyle: ¶. 2251-3; ¶. 2256.
 2. Report: African (West) No. 1046: Part II, Para. 87. (But they recommended a system of land registration).

ideas.¹ Very important also was the emphasis which the Committee laid on the relationship between Native Customary tenure and Native policy, which Morel had s own was the indispensable ground-work of British rule. The Committee concluded that native polity and social economy were inseparably connected with the preservation of native tenure. In this respect the Committee took cognisance of those processes through which the native polity could be undermined. Thus the native society would be disorganised either when the native authorities were deprived of their powers by the Government or when native authorities ceased to use their powers as guardians of the community's interests and arrogated to themselves a right of dealing with unallotted land for their own pecuniary benefit. Moreover, the Committee added that

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1. Report: No. 1046: Part II, Para. 92.
 This was supported by the evidence of R.E. Dennett: Q. 10,937 in African (West) No. 1047; Chris Johnson in African (West) No. 1048 P. 218; the chief of Ijebu-Ode who had said: "I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless members are yet unborn" (1046: Pt. II Para. 91); Robertson 2292; Partridge 4,145; Irvine 4,537; Alexander, 5031; James 6805; Crowther, 9932A; 10,135, Dennett 10,967; 10946 in African (West) No. 1047.

when members of the community ceased to recognise the inter-connecting ties of social custom and political allegiance and arrogated to themselves the right of disposing of the land they occupied regardless of these ties, the native polity became inoperative.¹

Almost every witness who was conversant with the land question held the same view that the land was closely connected with traditional Native Rule. C.W. Alexander, the Commissioner of Lands for Southern Nigeria declared: "Native rule depends upon the land system. They must stand or fall together. If it is the policy of the Government to Govern natives through themselves, subject to European supervision, retaining what is useful in their institutions, the native system of land tenure must be preserved at any cost."² R.L. Dennett said that "there is no doubt that the two things go together," and James, Acting Governor of Lagos, agreed with all these views. Strangely enough, Fuller, Chief Commissioner of lands in

1. Report: No. 1046: Para. 101, P. 33.

2. Report: No. 1046: Para. 101; Alexander Q. 3653 in African (West) No. 1047.

Ashanti was also of the opinion that it was not advisable to interfere with native custom.¹

In extolling the virtues of the traditional structure, however, the Committee did not divorce itself from the present reality. Its study and recommendations on individual ownership were, therefore, some of the most important aspects of the Report. It was not really discovered at what exact time true sales of stool and family land began to take place in West Africa nor was this absolutely necessary. Apart ^{from} the evidence of land bought by the Sierra Leone Company in 1787, it appears from the evidence taken by the Select Committee on "The West Coast of Africa" in 1842 that sales of land to Europeans in the Colony of Sierra Leone were already taking place before 1842. Also in a report by Crowther, Secretary of Native Affairs in the Gold Coast, it appeared that between 1860 and 1870 certain Gold Coast Chiefs had started selling

1. African (West) No. 1047; Dennett, 11,124; James 6706 and 6789; Fuller 4787. See also Irvine 4357; J.C. Maxwell 15,447, Paras. 21 and 22 of memo. No. 1048, P. 15; John Maxwell Q. 2 African (West) No. 1048, P. 17; J. Phillips Qs. 2 and 3 in African (West) No. 1048, P. 18.

land in the Densu Valley to individuals, though their right to do so was disputed. There were also a series of cases commencing in the early 1870's, which showed that the Judicial Assessor sanctioned the practice of sales, holding that the chief or head of the family could sell the stool or family land provided the consent of the requisite parties was obtained, though in the case of family land Mensah Sarbah added that "the alienation must be for the benefit of the family, either to discharge a family obligation or the proceeds of such alienation must be added to the family fund."¹ This practice of selling lands seemed to have been transferred to Lagos through the agency of the educated natives acquainted with European ideas, and from the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone experience.²

The Committee, therefore, recognised "that conditions in some of urban districts within the dependencies of the West Coast have become so changed by contact with European and Europeanized natives, that customary tenure has been to a large extent superseded by a

1. Mensah Sarbah, Fanti Customary Law (1897) P. 174.

2. African (West) No. 1046. Pt. III, Para. 343.

form with striking resemblances to English land tenure, a form which we have called individual tenure. We consider that it is no longer possible to revert to the old system in such areas and therefore propose that there should be power in each dependency to declare any district, subject to these conditions, to be an exempted district where facilities would be given for the creation within of a land tenure on English lines." For the rest of the bulk of the West African Dependencies, the Committee proposed that "the rules of native customary tenure with their prohibition of sale and mortgage shall continue in force within certain safeguards."¹

With the exception of Edun of Nigeria,² and the Gold Coast delegation, every other witness had opposed the idea of buying and selling of land. A memorandum from Rev. A.J. Wilkie of the United Free Church of Scotland working at Calabar had warned that any

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1. African (West) No. 1046, Pt. III, Para. 323.
 2. Edun, A. 13,123 in No. 1047, depreciated sale of land to non-bas, but declared that the selling of land was an established custom, and had been in existence for 50 years or more. The Committee could not accept his view.

change contemplated with reference to Efik land "should be on truly native lines of communal rather than individual ownership of land."¹ The Representative of the Oni of Ife thought that it was bad for any member of the community to sell lands to another member of the community; and when asked the reason why, he said: "The ground is sacred to the Ifes. We come from the ground and we have to go back to the ground, and it is altogether out of place for anyone to think of selling the ground."² A certain Akinsan, a clerk in the Government service in Lagos deprecated the idea of selling land since, as he said, it had a bad effect on native institutions, and "if it goes on we might find ourselves servants in our own country instead of landowners, all lands passing into the hands of strangers."³ In a personal memorandum, Hon. C.A. Sapara Williams, who was not blinded by bourgeois prejudice, opposed the extension of the system of sale of land: "I am sure the natives would not like the system of sale

1. A. J. Wilkie, in *African (West)* No. 1048, P. 196

2. Asho Eremese, 13473-4, *African (West)* No. 1047.

3. *African (West)* No. 1048, P. 241.

extended, he said, "and I know that they do appreciate the fact that it would adversely affect their institutions"

Apart from the natives from the Gold Coast, Crowther, the Secretary for Native Affairs, also made a special case providing for the different localities there. He declared: "The substitution of ungoverned individualism for the communal system in the rural districts in my opinion is the signal for poverty and social disaster for the majority. But it is equally clear that the communal system in its simplicity is inadequate for the needs of the changed and changing economic conditions The present conditions demand a greater degree of protection for the rights of the occupier than can be found in the existing native custom, and a greater degree of security for the communal character of the land than is offered by existing legislation"² Against this temperate view, Sir W. Brandford Griffith, and Robertson, the Chief Assistant Colonial Secretary, favoured unrestrained individual tenure.³ The Committee rejected this opinion, as it said,

1. Ibid. P. 244.

2. African (West) No. 1046, Para. 314; Crowther 10,126 in African (West) No. 1047.

3. Griffith, 14193; Robertson 2589, in No. 1047.

because such a tenure was alien to native custom and was likely to subvert the principle of native government and lead to poverty and social disaster for the majority. It upheld the view expressed by Crowther when it declared in terms reminiscent of his memorandum: "We, therefore, consider that, whilst in towns where commercialism has taken root it is too late to abolish individual tenure; in the country districts throughout the whole of the Dependencies with which we are called upon to deal, legislation should have as its aim the checking of the progress of individual tenure and the strengthening of native custom."¹

It would seem, therefore, that, though basically a compromise between two extremes, the Report of the Lands Committee to a great extent justified the fears entertained by Morel and other land reformers. An important factor in their advocacy had been an establishment of a legislative basis for any future agitation just as the Berlin Act had been a basis for humanitarian Intervention in the affairs of the Congo. A direct result of the Committee's recommendations was the

1. African (West) No. 1046, para. 315.

Land and Native Rights Ordinance (1916) of Northern Nigeria which, like that of 1910, provided that no title in Land should be valid without the consent of the Governor. This provision has met with great criticism on the alleged ground that even the native was not secure in his tenure because the new Ordinance enabled the Governor to alienate at pleasure.¹ The phraseology might indeed be stretched to bear that interpretation, but that would imply a drastic reversal of policy which was quite improbable.² Certainly, the sale of lands continued after this protracted debacle, but later reports indicated that legislation against the practice of alienation tended to minimise the transaction and so reduced their social and political effects.³

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1. See, W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria Under British Rule, P. 226. For Geary's article opposing the setting up on the West African Lands Committee see Westminster Gazette, 8 Aug. 1912. But the Colonial Office view was that "Sir W. Geary's opinions are not always worth much" Minute of 2 Sept. 1913 by Sir G.V. Fiddes on W.S. Coulson to CO 2 Sept 1913, CO 267/555.
 2. L.P. Mair, Native Policies in Africa (London, 1936) P. 133
 3. e.g. A 1931 report on Abeokuta said that sale of land for debts was still in operation, but that it had been checked by the law against such transactions.

As will be seen in the next chapter, there ^{some} were/genuine grounds why the "Coast" elite doubted the bona fides of the British authorities in land matters. The economic importance of such products as timber, cotton, palm oil and kernel and rubber tempted the British Government and other parties into measures which, however well-meaning, were seen, in the eyes of Africans and British humanitarians as undermining the ideal of imperial trusteeship. But inspite of this common ground for suspicion, there existed differences of emphasis on the particular problems posed by land alienation in each Colony. For example, the land question in the Gold Coast, seen against the background of the mining scramble and the happy native participation in it, was obviously of a different order from the problem in Lagos, where it would seem that the Government itself was the chief villain. Hence it could be argued that there was a much more tenable ground for suspicion of Government motives in Lagos than there was in the Gold Coast. Moreover, (though probably all were exaggerated by pressure-groups) it would also appear that

the threat of land alienation to Europeans, to African strangers, and the consequent development of individual ownership, was more imminent in the Gold Coast than in Lagos. On the whole, the educated African involvement in individual tenure should be seen as not only a natural development but also as an economic reflex of those curious political and religious ideas of independence which had become current from the 1850's. Yet this independence was not merely sought from the official colonial structure, but also from chiefly power. The case for a freehold African yeomanry with individual tenure as presented by Adegboyega Adun, was surely an anti-Indirect Rule concept, but one which might be expected to have a liberal appeal.

CHAPTER VI.ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND AFRICAN WELFARE.

The protracted arguments over the West African Land Question might have largely belonged to the realm of academic theory were it not that the problem of land-use itself was an integral part of it. The problem of native welfare incident on the issue of sub-soil exploitation of West African lands had compelled the humanitarians to insist on African workers being well treated and adequately remunerated for their labours. At the same time, however, all seemed to have agreed that European capital alone could work and develop the mines. In contrast, the exploitation of arboricultural and sylvan produce was a contentious question, generating impulsive reactions to some well-meaning official policy, exposing the opportunism of an Imperial agency, and laying bare the efforts of the Colonial Office and the humanitarians to maintain the ideal of imperial duty which was severely threatened by the unscrupulous activities and arguments of commercial firms and materialist individuals.

As indicated in the previous chapter, Morel had admitted that European capital and machinery were also

necessary to exploit the timber and possibly rubber resources of West Africa; but he at the same ^{time} felt that Government guidance was necessary if the prosperity of the forest industry was to be maintained. On the other hand, the efforts of the Governments of the West African Colonies, especially those of Southern Nigeria, Lagos and the Gold Coast to regulate forest produce, were not appreciated by other humanitarians, particularly John Holt and the Aborigines Protection Society. The proclamation of 11 December 1901¹ by Sir Ralph Moor, followed by that of Sir William MacGregor of Lagos,² regulating the cutting of timber and forest produce, found John Holt grumbling and the APS protesting against the measures.

Holt's criticisms stemmed from many grounds.

Uppermost was his fear of loss in his trade of which timber and rubber were important items. He had mastered the art

1. No. 28 of 1901, CO 588/1 which came into force in 11 Dec. 1901 aimed at conserving timber, rubber and other forest produce. It gave the High Comm. the power "to constitute forest reserves, to prohibit by order the cutting and collecting, sale, purchase, and export of any forest produce except by concessionaires and licenses, and at specified periods of the year". Chiefs whose areas were affected received royalties, "subject to an understanding to spend part of this sum in establishing and maintaining rubber nurseries as directed by the forestry officers".
2. No. 14 of 1902.

of dealing directly with the natives and therefore felt that official intervention might well spell the doom of his commercial prosperity. His personal involvement can easily be illustrated from the fact that he was most critical of the colonial authorities when their measures threatened his commercial sphere of influence. He bitterly criticised Moor and MacGregor in Southern Nigeria, which was his main zone of operation, but when the same measures were later attempted in the Gold Coast and with more dynamic native opposition than was shown in Southern Nigeria, Holt did not follow up his criticism with the same zeal. One can only agree with him, as he told Morel, that the reason for this was because he had no economic interest on the Gold Coast.¹

Despite this personal involvement, however, Holt also justified his opposition to the forest measures with humanitarian considerations. He accused both Moor and MacGregor of pursuing forestry policies directed to dispossess natives of their rights. He complained against the usurpation of African rights by Moor's Government: "He has in that Ordinance assumed rights which dispossess the natives of ownership and make the government a leaseholder. Nothing

1. Holt to Morel, 3 Feb. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.

can be more retrogressive than such a policy"¹ At the same time, he was worried with the measures adopted by MacGregor because he felt that ^{their} ~~its~~ ultimate effect might be to rob the native of his rights:

"It may be that our Government is going to rob the native of his rights in Nigeria by legal chicanery, just as Leopold has robbed them in the Congo, and this may account for their weakness in upholding our rights under the Berlin Act. They may all be thieves. Certainly the poor have no protector in Government's West Africa. The voice of reason and rights is not listened to because of those interested in upholding wrong, which, of course, they must find words to justify. Such, however, has always been the case, and I suppose will ever be. Selfishness is eternal on earth ...".²

He supported this argument in favour of native rights by pointing out that it was the desire for revenue, more than anything else, which caused these Ordinances and financial regulations on forests to be passed. He ruefully alleged that Moor's Government would "bag the rents, the claim to the land being set up by the plea of purchase from the Niger Company ..." Holt continued in the same letter to Morel:

"... The half of the fine given to the natives is a sop to prevent trouble and so represents what the native will be quite happy to accept as full value not knowing what the Government is doing. It is

1. Holt to Morel, 21 Oct. 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 22 May 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

all for more money that Moor is working".¹

The administration of the rents and fines by MacGregor's Government was also dubious to Holt: "With the exception of half of the fine on entry, given to the natives, the government is, I believe, pocketing the whole of the annual rent which it imposes".² As always, Holt never reconciled himself with the government's need for more revenue. He wrote sourly to Morel: "These governors think only of one thing, that is how to produce revenue; when they have got revenue they think they have fulfilled the object of their existence ...".³ And if he was overcome by the plea for necessary revenue, Holt complained that the money was being collected by officials and the native chiefs jointly in the Lagos hinterland, and that it appeared there was no proper audit or supervision. He believed that "such a system must open great temptations to abuses being brought about ...".⁴ Holt, however, knew that trade and imports were generally in decline. Therefore, he was too sentimentally attached to his personal fortunes and to his ingrained free trade

1. Holt to Morel, 29 June 1900, F8/1, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 1 Feb. 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

3. Holt to Morel, 23 April 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

4. Holt to Morel, 18 June 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

ideas to realise that a government which lacked financial resources would be incapable of even protecting life and property for which he cared so much.

Holt, was, however, guided by other considerations, in particular, the economic argument. He was of the opinion that these Ordinances prevented the development of the country's resources and hampered trade. In September 1900, he had warned the Colonial Office against the deterrent effect on trade likely to result from Moor's proclamation:

"The truth is that this proclamation as it stands must be deterrent to all enterprise in this direction. Picture to yourself a huge forest covering thousands of square miles of land unutilised and say whether something should not be done to induce capital and enterprise to enter than land and make something of its products hitherto rotting. If the whole of that forest were cut down today in 20 years there would be another forest equally large and valuable ...".¹

He believed that the Forest Ordinance of Lagos was "pemic-
iously" brought about "in imitation of Moor's stupidity in

1. Holt to CO 21 Sept. 1900, CO 520/6.

Lower Nigeria, probably at the initiative of Hitchens¹ who may know a lot about forestry but nothing about its commercial use".² The commercial disadvantages to these forest regulations were also emphasised in the same letter to Morel:

"There is a country giving a natural supply - without man's aid - of these valuable commodities which constitute the trade of the country. Every inducement should be given to explore the new products laying unused and wasted so far as man is concerned, since the creation. Thank God they have not yet regulated the use of the Palm Tree or they might have killed the Trade which after all is our backbone. We no sooner discover how to work a new thing and to get a market for it than down comes our intelligent Government to find out how to hamper, harass and stop our energies. They, of course, are on the look out for our berths for their tribe and more revenue on the old style ...".³

Holt at the same time felt that one effect of the conditions imposed on the "wood trade" was that people who needed timber

1. P. Hitchens was a Eurasian Forestry Officer in Southern Nigeria. It must be noted that the Colonial Office very much doubted Hitchens' abilities. When Hitchens requested permission to give an address on forestry to the Liverpool Geographical Society and Chamber of Commerce, Charles Strachey minuted: "This is the author of the statements to which Sir W. Thistleton Dyer took strong exception in a private letter to the Commercial Intelligence Dept. It made the Director so angry that he thought it must be the work of an ignorant, pushing black man - - Mr. H. is no doubt a valuable forestry officer, but it is possible that his botanical knowledge is not profound - Some of his statements contained in his report (as reported in the Lagos Standard) are open to very considerable doubt". Minute of 6 Dec. 1900 by Charles Strachey on P. Hitchens to CO, 19 Nov. 1900, CO 520/6.

2. Holt to Morel, 14 Oct. 1901, F8/1, EDMP

3. Ibid.

would procure it from other territories governed, as he alleged, by "more intelligent and enterprising people".¹ Since the men who in Nigeria formulated "these eternal ordinances" had not the haziest ideas of what was good for the country they governed, Holt would say, they deserved to be beaten by the adjoining governments which had more governing sense. And he was particularly sore with the notion that the authors of "all the mischief" were "well paid" and earned "much honour whilst their victims have to stand all the misery".² He was very surprised that MacGregor "could be capable of such a retrograde step"³ as passing "this abominable forst ordinance" which "is going to be the means of shutting up the forest for all time if we do not mind ...".⁴ When his agents at Onitsha wrote to him complaining of the effects of the Forest Ordinances on trade, Holt believed that these laws "irritated everybody".⁵ He alleged that the Government only wanted "to make a show and so stop the trade of the country". He grumbled that "the

1. Holt to Morel, 14 Oct. 1901, F8/1, EDMP.

2. Ibid.

3. Holt to Morel, 5 Jan. 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

4. Holt to Morel, 22 April 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

5. Holt to Morel, 19 Oct. 1905, F8/2, EDMP.

natives who had been taught after much patience how to find rubber were being successfully encouraged to gather it by the traders when all of a sudden down came these soldiers with their laws and licenses and all chaos". He lamented that the people concerned in working the commercial interests of the country were not consulted as Chamberlain had promised "before these revolutionary Ordinances are passed which may spell ruin to their entire interest and to the whole of the native community".¹

Thus Holt regarded all the attempts made by the colonial governments to regulate forest produce as negative. He had no confidence in the staff of the Forestry Department and their ideas. He looked on botanical gardens, used for experimental purposes, "more as luxuries than necessities or as not being of any economic value".² He wanted to see in West Africa "a few practical level headed botanists who would travel the districts allotted to them, use their eyes and exercise their minds not in writing and formulating idiotic ordinances and reports for government digestion, but in seeing and considering sensibly the best means of economically exploiting the flora of their districts".³ He

1. Holt to Morel, 19 Oct. 1905, F8/2, EDMF

2. Holt to Morel, 4 Oct. 1902, F8/2, EDMF.

3. Holt to Morel, 24 Sept. 1906, F8/3, EDMF.

alleged that research workers in the Forestry Departments would achieve nothing because "they knew nothing of economic or commercial botany".¹ When he was told that De Wildeman's method² of obtaining rubber was in accord with what the natives had been doing before the Forestry Department introduced novel techniques, Holt flared up against that Forestry Department of Southern Nigeria for introducing a destructive method.³ He wrote accordingly to Morel: "The Forestry Department in Southern Nigeria is an abominable incubus sent by Kew a la India - It creates nothing -"⁴ To him, "they could only make laws repressive of human energy".⁵ Not even the work of H.N. Thompson, the forestry expert who rendered useful service to Nigeria impressed Holt. When Thompson reported on the Gold Coast Forests, recommending the need for legislation, Holt alleged that he wanted to repeat in the Gold Coast what he had done in Southern Nigeria, that is to establish "a set of parasites" (in the nature of

1. Holt, to Morel, 24 Sept. 1906, F8/3, EDMP

2. De Wildeman held the view that the best yield of rubber was obtained by cutting down the vine and beating the bark; the vine, if cut down, sprouted from the root and grew again; whereas the usual process of tapping enfeebled and in time killed the plant. The Forest experts of Southern Nigeria preached the tapping method.

3. Holt to Morel, 19 Oct. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.

4. Holt to Morel, 30 Sept. 1909, F8/3, EDMP.

5. Ibid, l c. cit.

forestry officials) on that Colony "similar to what Kew has foisted a la India style on Southern Nigeria".¹

Holt, however, was not alone in denouncing these Ordinances. He had successfully rallied the Liverpool Chamber against them. In a memorandum to Chamberlain, the African Trade Section of that Chamber had in March 1902 criticised the "absolute powers" which the proclamation gave to Sir Ralph Moor, also making the economic argument that the proclamation was more likely to reduce the volume of the wood trade than to conserve forests.² In May of the same year, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce made similar charges.³ Chamberlain agreed with both Chambers that the natural resources of the colonies and protectorates should be developed "as fully and speedily as possible", but added that such development must take into account the future needs of the Government and the natives.⁴

In April of the same year the APS waded into the issue, requesting that sanction should not be given to Moor's Forestry Proclamation since it saw "very grave objections" to it - objections graver than those raised against MacGregor's

1. Holt to Morel, 3 Feb. 1910, FS/4, EDMP.

For Thompson's report see ... Cd 4993/10 of 1908, op. cit.

2. Liverpool C/C to Chamberlain, 27 March 1902, CO 520/16.

3. Manchester C/C to Chamberlain, 1 May 1902 (ibid).

4. Chamberlain to Liverpool C/C, 12 April 1902, draft (ibid).

draft Ordinance which the Society had alleged was against the sanctity of the treaties made by the British Government with native chiefs.¹ The APS contended that Moor's proclamation appeared to assume a right of ownership over all 'native lands' which it had defined as "waste and forest lands at the disposal of natives", that it imposed severe penalties, and fines on people, and that it thus deprived the natives "of all proprietary right, tribal and communal or individual". The Society, while it recognised the importance of equitable measures adopted in the interests of the natives themselves, nevertheless complained that "the circumstances of British protection were no warrant for the contemplated appropriations and disposal of 'native lands' and their produce".² It must be pointed out, however, that, apart from the explanation given by the Colonial Office to the effect that tribal land could not be alienated without the assent of the Chiefs, the APS was probably right in criticising the range of Moor's forestry proclamation. This proclamation, through an extravagant use of such phrases as "native lands", "waste on forest land at the disposition of the Government", "forest reserve", or "forestry reserves and

1. See Chap. III.

2. H.R. Fox Bourne to C.O. 18 April 1902, CO 520/41.

native lands", tended to give the impression that there was likelihood of native rights to land being infringed.¹ But for the APS to persist in its protests after the Colonial Office had given it a convincing explanation that the provisions of the Proclamation were directed, not against the use of the land and its products by the native owners, but against the exploitation of the forests by traders, both native and European, who thought only of making an immediate profit for themselves and did not consider the permanent interests of the native owners of the land,² found the Society repeating the same arguments it had made before and irritating the officials. A.B. Keith was forced to declare that the Society was "evidently" foolish;³ and Strachey advised that their letters on this topic should be "put by".⁴

It is possible to argue that apart from the APS other critics of the forestry measures were more chagrined by the novelty of governmental interference with commerce

1. For further discussion of this point see Tamuno, "British Administrative Control", op. cit.

2. CO to Fox Bourne, 2 May 1902, draft, CO 520/41.

3. Minute of 6 May by A.B. Keith on APS to Co, 6 May 1902, CO 520/41.

4. Minute of 9 May by Strachey, (ibid).

than influenced by personal or group economic involvement. In this case, the arguments regarding the economic disadvantages incident on regulating the exploitation of produce and other humanitarian considerations made, might be given more weight. From the economic angle it is relevant to point out that Sir W.I.T. Dyer, director of the Kew Gardens, had opposed the "minute and particular" rules which characterised these two Forestry measures. Making his observations on the Forestry Proclamation of Southern Nigeria, Dyer had told the Colonial Office that the general principle in a legislation of this description was "to endeavour to attain the object in view by the simplest and broadest expedients". He was of the opinion that "any attempt to carry regulation into minute detail, the propriety of which can only be judged by experience", was "open to the risk of making the whole policy abortive". He contended that if it was desired to regulate the rubber or timber industry in such a way as to stop the wholesale destruction of the trees which had taken place in Southern Nigeria, the assertion of the principle that this practice would not be tolerated was probably the only practical possibility under the present circumstances. His conclusion was that the proper thing to do was that "every attempt should be made to make it clear to the natives that the object is not to hamper the rubber

industry but to provide for its permanence"¹ The Colonial Office was not over-impressed with these expressed views of Dyer,² but the other allegation which stemmed from Holt's cynical, but sometimes well-founded, belief that the Colonial Governments kept genuine competitors out of the forest so that they might ensure jobbery and monopoly for their favourites,³ is one that might later be seen to have more plausibility.

On the other hand, the native protests to these measures might be said to have justified the criticism that they invaded native rights. Although there were no recorded protests to Moor's Forest measures in Southern Nigeria, MacGregor's draft Ordinance met with stiff opposition in Lagos. In a leader captioned 'Troublous Times', the Lagos Standard bemoaned the draft Ordinance of September 1901 as another of the "alarming and appressive legislative enactments" which aimed at reducing the people of the Colony and Hinterland of Lagos to the 'direst straits'.⁴ 'Monster' meetings

1. W.I.T. Dyer to CO, 31 Oct. 1901, CO 520/11.

2. Minute of 7 Nov. by P.H. Ezekiel (ibid).

3. Holt to Morel, 3 Feb. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.
This point will be referred to later in this chapter.

4. Lagos Standard, 25 Sept. 1901.
The other measure referred to was the Provincial Councils Bill.

were held, culminating in the 'monster petition' from seven hundred signatories sent to the Governor and members of the Legislative Council.¹ The Petition had criticised the "too sweeping and far-reaching changes" which the projected Forest measures might have on land tenure and objected to British officials being given jurisdiction in forestry administration.² These protests probably led to the amendment of that draft Ordinance which was later passed in May 1902.

It must be pointed out, however, that these native protests were mainly inspired by elitist groups both in Southern Nigeria and in the Gold Coast, who, either because of their love of free enterprise untrammelled by Government intervention or their fear that Government protection would inevitably deal a blow to their traditional practice of exploiting the ignorance of other joint-owners of these communal forests, saw nothing good in the positive and genuine efforts of the Colonial authorities to find a solution to the wholesale and unsystematic exploitation of the forest produce of the Colonies. Whatever individual grievances the natives and the British critics of these

1. Lagos Standard, 18 Sept. 1901.

2. MacGregor to C.O. 10 Feb. 1902 encl. petition dated 14 Sept. 1901, CO 147/160.

measures, might have had, there can be no doubt that the Colonial authorities at that time were eagerly engaged in much experimental work concerned with the introduction of new species and the organisation of Forestry Departments which were very vital both for the guidance of the natives and the maintenance of the prosperity of the industry in sylvan produce.

Holt's rearguard action against these arboricultural changes in the Colonial plane was also reflected in his negative attitude towards the Imperial role of the British Cotton Growing Association. But in order to fully understand the motives behind these imperial attitudes, the ideas which animated the founders of this Cotton movement and the place of cotton culture in the native economy of West Africa must be grasped.

It is a commonplace of the economic history of West Africa that from time immemorial cotton had been an important item of its home and export economy. In his famous Description of Africa, which is probably the first record on African cotton, Leo Africanus mentions that cotton was grown in what later became Nigeria. Describing the Kingdom of "Ghinea", he says that the place exceedingly abounded in barley, rice, cattle, fishes and cotton; that they sold their cotton to the merchants of the Barbary States in

exchange for the cloths of Europe, brass vessels, and armour; and that the inhabitants were clad in black and blue cotton which covered their faces while their priests and doctors of the law wore dresses of white cotton!¹

The cotton plant (Eriodendron aufractnosum) grew wild in the West Coast, producing the "Kapok" of commerce, while the "bombax", which produced a similar floss to "kapok" also occurred. Although India is the supposed birthplace of cotton manufacture, the inhabitants of the Western and Southern Coasts of Africa probably made cotton garments long before they were imported into their country. The beauty of the colours and design of the native cotton dresses were frequently commented on by the early explorers. From the Upper Niger Valley, which was its cradle, cotton culture and manufacture had spread to other parts of West Africa, particularly to the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Lagos, the Island of Fernando Po, and into the interior.

From Macpherson's Annals it appears that cotton woven on the "Coast of Ghinea", was imported to London from the Bight of Benin in 1590. But due to the large demand for cotton robes created by the Mohammedan tribes who inhabited Northern Nigeria, this area became a big centre of the cotton

1. Leo Africanus, Description of Africa. Ref. in N.M. Penzer, Cotton in British West Africa (1920)

industry. The cotton was ginned by hand, or by very primitive means, spurn into yarn and woven on very simple looms into the so-called "country cloths" which were narrow strips of cloth sewn together to make cloths of any size. These stuffs were said to be very durable and were ornamented by the use of dyed yarns. What was not needed for local requirements was exported by river and caravan as far north as the Mediterranean. Kano which was a great cotton market, bought up almost all the cotton from the neighbouring countries often paying twice the prices paid for cotton at Liverpool.¹

It was, however, Thomas Clegg, a Manchester merchant, who first carried on a profitable trade in cotton with West Africa. He had encouraged natives to grow cotton and had hoped, by giving them employment, to discourage the slave traffic, as well as increase England's supply of raw material. His experiments at first confined to the district around Sierra Leone, was afterwards extended to other interior cotton fields, and the residences of the Chiefs around Abeokuta. In 1851 Clegg imported 285 lbs of West African cotton; by 1853 the imports had risen to 37 bales; and 1859, they had soared to 3,500 bales. At the same time, MacGregor Laird had shown great interest in the cotton-producing

1. Vide Macpherson, Annals. Ref. in N.M. Penzer, op. cit.

potentialities of West Africa. In 1857, he tried to establish trading stations on the river Niger, but his enterprise was ruined by bad climatic conditions and native opposition. Nevertheless by 1860, Lagos had become the largest cotton port of West Africa, since the country around it was well adapted to the growth of cotton and the natives skilled in the mysteries of the local trade.¹ An outstanding characteristic was that cotton culture was organised as a native industry.

In spite of this interest in West African cotton, the British Cotton industries depended largely on the American supplies. The foundation of the British Cotton Growing Association was apparently due to certain developments in the American sphere of production. In the first years of the twentieth century, many economists and manufacturers began to point out that the Lancashire cotton industry was too dependent on American supplies. The uncertainties of the American supplies were seen to be implicit in several episodes which had featured American development. The American Civil War which had greatly cut down the cotton supplies to Lancashire, had acted as a disturbing element for the whole cotton industry of Lancashire. Moreover, the

1. N.M. Penzer, Cotton in British West Africa (1920) pp. 7-8.

virtual monopoly of production which America enjoyed had enabled speculators to manipulate the stocks and thus raised or depressed prices to suit their purposes. At a time when various commercial combinations were sporadically promoted, a gigantic syndicating of cotton appeared not merely as a contingency by no means to be scoffed at, but a real danger to the British sphere of consumption.¹ For example, in 1904, owing to unfavourable climatic conditions, the American crop was comparatively a small one, (being only 10,124,000 bales, which was much short of world requirements), this enabled speculators to "corner" the crop; the most notorious of these being a certain Sully who was generally known as "the great wheat operator".² On the other hand, American official estimates of the crop for subsequent years were often faulty and had, therefore, often misled cotton consumers. Most telling was the fact that the increased and increasing consumption by America of her own raw material, combined with the increase in the number of continental mills, threatened the proud position which Lancashire held as the greatest cotton manufacturing centre in the world. This would mean loss of money, lack of work and therefore social

1. For this background, see West African Mail, 3 April 1903 Penzer, op. cit, p. 9.

2. Penzer, op. cit., p. 9.

misery for hundreds of thousands of cotton operatives.¹

In January 1901, Benjamin Crapper, a cotton magnate, had pointed out to the Oldham Chamber of Commerce the dangerous position of the Lancashire Cotton trade. A committee, appointed by the Oldham Chamber to consider the question, reported in November of that year that various parts of the Empire were suitable for the cultivation of cotton for the Lancashire industry. At a meeting of representatives of various Chambers of Commerce, held in February 1902 another committee was appointed to discuss the matter. And on 7 May 1902, at a dinner of West African merchants held in Albion Hotel in Manchester, the British Cotton Growing Association was launched. With Sir Alfred Jones, as its first President and J. Arthur Hutton² his deputy, and supported by various interests animated by similar ideals, the Association was formally inaugurated on 12 June 1902 with a guarantee fund of £50,000. Soon after it was found that this guarantee fund was inadequate and was accordingly raised to £100,000. But the extraordinary situation in America in 1904 caused

1. WAM, 3 April 1903.

2. Hutton, James Arthur, Born at Bowdon 1862, 4th Son of James F. Hutton, formerly M.P. for North Manchester; Educ. at St. Paul's Coll. Stony Stratford and Heidelberg. One of the founders of the BCGA and its Vice-President; Vice-President National Ass. of Fisheries Board; Director Atlas Insurance Co; Club: Union (Manchester). Died 28 Feb. 1955.

considerable anxiety amongst the manufacturers and operatives. It was, therefore, decided to reconstitute the Association on a permanent basis, with a capital of £500,000, and to apply for a Royal Charter which was finally sealed on 27 August, 1904.¹

An initial drawback was the announcement by the

1. Vide Penzer, op. cit. p. 9.

BCGA. Pamphlets

WAM, 10 April 1903.

For an account, see W.F. Tewson: British Cotton Growing Association. Issued by the Association on its Golden Jubilee, 1904-1954. Apart from Sir A.L. Jones and J. Arthur Hutton, other prominent enthusiasts were John Edward Newton, Senior Vice-President of the Oldham Chamber of Commerce who usually presided over its deliberations. He helped very much to convert the BCGA into a powerful, corporate organisation.

Born 1848, eldest son of James Newton J.P. of Greenacres Lodge, Oldham. Entered his father's business of cotton spinning and manufacturing. A Director of Asa Lees & Co. Ltd., a large firm of cotton machinists; held other directorships; Governor of Oldham Infirmary and J.P. for the County Borough of Oldham. Delegate to the Congress of C/Cs of The Empire held in Paris during the Exhibition year. John C. Atkins. Sec. of the BCGA; After learning cotton business, became Chartered Accountant, and in that capacity acted as Auditor for some of the largest companies in Oldham where he lived all his life. F.I.C.A. (1889); Sec. of the Oldham C/C formed 1883.

Alfred Emmott: President of the Oldham C/C, and Liberal M.P. for the Borough of Oldham.

Association that it did not expect any profits from its work for some time. In fact, it stipulated that no dividends should be paid for seven years since, as it claimed, pioneer work would be necessary over a considerable period. Consequently a great difficulty was encountered in raising the earmarked capital. The B.C.G.A., therefore, was placed in a position in which it sought and received assistance from the Government in the way of monetary grants, given, firstly, by local Governments on condition that the Association should spend an equal amount on cotton growing and experimental work, and later by the Imperial Treasury on condition that the money should be spent in special districts approved by the Government.¹ This implied that the Government recognized the work of the Association as likely to be of value in developing the resources of the Colonies and in supplying the wants of British commerce. The success of the movement for promoting the growth of cotton within the Empire was, therefore generally hoped for and encouraged at a time when the economic exploitation of the Colonies was succeeding that phase of territorial acquisitions which had gratified the political ambitions of jingoistic officials. For England, the success of this cotton movement meant safety for the most important

1. Penzer, op. cit., p. 10; BCGA. Pamphlets Nos. 1-5.

of her industries, and self-protection against a peril which might become a national economic disaster. For Lancashire, it meant cessation of dependence on America and increased prosperity from increased supplies of raw material. For West Africa, it was hoped that this might mean the creation of a new native industry, an increase in native purchasing power, and consequent advance in its development.¹

At the outset Morel was so confident that the BCGA would be another opportunity for the native to prove his capacity that he advertised the work and aims of the Association, pointing out why West Africa was favourable for cotton culture. Not only had the West African negro, he claimed, revolutionized the growth of cotton in America, but had shown immense capacity for this and other industries in his home also. Had not the natives of West Africa grown their own cotton, woven and dyed it with their own indigo as far back as the 11th Century? Was not the progress of West Africans within a short time in the export of palm oil and kernel, groundnuts, mahogany, and rubber a sufficient pointer to their capacity? In asking these general questions, Morel, however, pointed out that of all West African countries,

1. WAM, 3 April 1903.

Nigeria was most favourable for concentration of efforts. In Northern Nigeria and Lagos hinterland were vast fields, a native population, numerous and intelligent, commercially apt, and thoroughly familiarised with the techniques of the cotton industry. The soil was suitable; large open parklike expanses existed; heavy annual rainfall and fairly well-irrigated country abounded. On the other hand, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast did not appear to him as attractive. In Sierra Leone, the population was lacking; there were stories about emigration from the interior to the Liberian border due to the unpopularity of the Hut-Tax and other colonial calamities; the area around was greatly forested; while the occupation of the people with groundnuts in Gambia should not be disturbed. In the Gold Coast, mining industries seemed to have taken a great toll of the available labour force; and to further divest it of this labour seemed to Morel objectionable; it would leave an amount not sufficient to maintain the cocoa industry. But he had also warned that the growth of cotton must remain a native industry. He wanted the crude methods of cultivation by the natives improved; the natives should be supplied with imported seed or taught to select his own seed, and furnished with agricultural implements superior to the rough hoe; but it must be made clear to him that he was working for himself for his

own enrichment in cooperation with the white man, "in a sort of partnership of science and muscle".¹

In this attempt to bring pressure to bear on the BCGA to start off its operation according to what was regarded as the right policy, Morel was not alone. In June 1905, at the International Cotton Congress held at Manchester, Alfred Emmott, Member of Parliament for Oldham, keeper of that city's humanitarian conscience, and a close friend of Morel's, had made a strong case for the natives of West Africa to be well treated during this new movement for Imperial cotton supply. Referring to the Labour question, Emmott pointed out that cotton was a growth of hot climates and did not flourish in regions where whites could give maximum labour in open fields. Therefore, the problem was how England could best deal with native labour which alone could produce cotton satisfactorily. He claimed that the urgency of this question of the proper treatment of natives under European powers transcended the humanitarian or even sentimental view-point; it was at once an ethical, economic, and a psychical question.²

1. WAM, 17 April 1903.

2. Speech by Alfred Emmott at the International Cotton Congress held at Birmingham between 5 to 9 June, 1905.
Vide BCGA Pamphlets No. 6, March 1906.

Emmott was therefore strongly of the opinion that Britain would never procure large quantities of cotton from West Africa unless natives there grew it as farmers and not merely as hired labourers. Best results, he said, could only be produced effectively under a system of free labour, and under a system by which the natives retained possession of the soil which had been theirs for long ages past. They should accordingly be led along the paths of industry and commerce without taking from them their human freedom. He continued:

"I am perfectly certain that in the solution of this problem will be found the best solution of the problem of increased growth of cotton, particularly in Africa - I say it is an ethical problem; we must remember these men have rights, and we must be careful to recognise them. It is an economic problem, because unless we treat these men properly we cannot get the best economic results from their labour. And it is a psychical problem because we must try, as far as possible, to get inside the black's mind, so that we can most readily lead him on the line of his natural development in order to become a better being than in the past, and a man who freely, willingly, and happily undertakes the regular work which is necessary for his moral and material regeneration".¹

Impressed by these humane pressures, the BCGA always officially dissociated itself from any invasion of native rights. But when it made its first efforts in West Africa, the Association did not seem to have heeded the

1. Speech by Alfred Emmott, op. cit, BCGA Pamphlet No. 6.

warnings sounded by Morel and Emmott. Contrary to the advice which Morel had given, the BCGA became involved in efforts to grow cotton in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. As early as 1905, the Association was already surprised with the failure of its crops in Sierra Leone;¹ in spite of various grants and government patronages, even as late as 1912, the prospects of a successful cotton industry of any size in the Gold Coast was extremely doubtful.² But the most disturbing element was the initial attempt by the BCGA to launch its operations on plantation basis. Although the Council of the Association had agreed with the stipulations of the Colonial authorities that farms must be for experimental purposes, the agents of the Association leased large tracts of land from natives, ostensibly for model farms, but in reality for plantation economy. This measure met with opposition from many quarters; moreover the BCGA discovered by experience and public protests that peasant production was generally a more economical proposition than plantation economy.³

An apt illustration of the BCGA's admission of

1. BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.

2. BCGA to C.O., 15 July 1912, CO 96/525.

3. See Hancock, Problems of Economic Policy Pt. II op. cit. p. 189.

its initial mistake was its surprise at the total failure of the Sierra Leone's plantations which had been referred to. In January 1905, the BCGA told the Colonial Office that this "great disappointment" might "necessitate a complete change in the policy of the Association". It went on to point out "that the original policy adopted by the Council, viz, the establishment of cotton cultivation as a native industry, was the right one and that plantations should be avoided as far as possible, except as a means of education for the natives".¹ F.A.G. Butler found that the BCGA had raised "some very serious questions". Having noted the virtual admission by the Association that the large plantations were "a departure from the original policy" which was defined as the "establishment of cotton cultivation as a native industry", Butler minuted: "The crop of the Association large plantations in Sierra Leone has been a total failure, and the Association now think that it will be wise to go back to the system of a few small plantations, coupled with supervision of native planters ... When we showed some apprehension that these large plantations might be regarded too much as a source of profit, the Association were very careful to explain that they were primarily designed for the

1. BCGA to C.O. 12 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.

instruction of the natives just as much as small plantations had been, and that only secondarily would they be run with a view to paying expenses or making a profit. This slip on their part emphasises the necessity of our keeping the idea of profit-making quite subservient to that of the encouragement of cotton ginning by the natives"¹ But Sidney Olivier was pessimistic and was of the opinion that the Association was either unwilling or incapable of guiding the natives. "It is evident", he minuted, "that at present the BCGA are not in a position to teach the natives". He, however, warned. "... A great deal of harm may be done by offering to teach black men what white men don't know. The black man is always pretty sceptical as to the value of theoretical instruction offered him by the white man, and when the white man's demonstrations don't work, the private criticism of the black man is not complimentary. He makes no allowances - In order to teach him you must show results".² R.L. Antrobus lamented the inability of the BCGA to show these results to the natives. "... When we began", he minuted, "we thought that the British Cotton Growing Association would be able to command expert advice and assistance; but

1. Minute of 21 Jan. 1905 by F.G.A. Butler, *ibid.*

2. Minute of 6 Feb. 1905 by S. Olivier, *ibid.*

they can't, and unless we can supply it, the growing of cotton in West Africa will be a failure".¹

This inability or unwillingness of the BCGA to conduct cotton culture as a native industry, led it into undesirable transactions with native populations. Such a transaction as was entered into with the people of Ibadan provoked criticisms from many sources. On 6 March 1905, an agreement was alleged reached between the Bale of Ibadan and some members of the Ibadan Council on the one hand and the Agents of the BCGA on the other, leasing 5,000 acres of Ibadan land to the Association for a period of 30 years at a rental of 3d. an acre per annum "subject to a right of renewal for a second period of 30 years should the BCGA so wish at ^arental of not less than 6d. per acre".²

It seems that the BCGA had taken advantage of the Bale's greedy eagerness for rents to dupe him into a one-sided agreement. When the people of Ibadan, by and large, knew what had happened, the Ibadan Council, protested en masse against it. In a memorial to the Lagos Governor, the Council claimed that "the appropriation of the land at

1. Minute of 14 Feb. 1905 by R.L. Antrobus, *ibid*.

2. Agreement between the Bale of Ibadan and Ibadan Council on the one hand and agents of the BCGA on the other; 1905
Copy in EDMP, F9/E-L.

Ibadan by the BCGA, without the cordial acquiescence of the Chiefs, is inconsistent with the pledges and assurances made from time by this Government to the people of that country".¹ Apart from these historical antecedents, the social and economic situation in Ibadan made this transaction curious.

Even at that time, Ibadan was already a large town, ranking as the most extensive native city south of the Sahara. If the whole of its population, half of which were said to live in the farms, were at once in the urban area, the population would be estimated^{at}/a quarter of a million mark. Since the country was settling down from the previous civil wars and military patrols, the cost of living was seen to have increased and there was the imminent problem of feeding a large and growing population being thrust on the farms. "Under such circumstances, therefore", the people of Ibadan asked, "ought we to diminish the area of food-producing acres". It was at the same time observed that the farms had virtually reached the limits of their expansion; in fact, a few years before the agreement, boundary disputes between the Ibadans and the Egbas, and between the Ibadans and the Ijebus, would have led to a renewal of civil wars but for the intervention of the Resident at Ibadan. With

1. Petition of the Ibadan Council to Lagos Governor
Copy in EDMP., F.9./E-L.

no room for the further expansion of a growing population, who were ready to fight their neighbours in order to increase their acres, it seemed unlikely that the people would willingly have given up so large an extent of the restricted area.¹ One feels that the sullen, silent, but greedy acquiescence of the Bale and Council did not mean a unanimous approval.

The most important consideration of the Ibadan representation was that the land which the BCGA leased was land under cultivation and in actual use from which the owners were to be dispossessed for the benefit of the Association. A compensation, such as was agreed on, which merely was to go into the general revenue of the town, left in the lurch "the poor farmers with wives and children who would be turned out of their patrimony to make room for cotton".² There could be no doubt that the effort to improve indigenous staple and introduce new species of cotton was desirable; but to starve families in order to increase cotton cultivation by plantation methods at Ibadan was surely a hard and destructive policy. In March 1905, Cathcart Wason had told the Commons that individuals and associations had made remonstrances and complaints regarding the terms on which

1. See Ibadan Petition, op. cit, for some of these points.

2. Ibid, ~~loc. cit.~~

5,000 acres were acquired from the natives of Ibadan, and that the natives objected to parting with their land.¹

When these criticisms came to the notice of the BCGA, it still kept up to its belief that it was "utterly opposed to alienation of land and unfair dealing with Natives generally".² Since Lyttleton had, in reply to Cathcart Wason's observation, said that he had received no such remonstrance as referred to, Morel at this point judiciously sat on the fence.³ But Dr. Obadiah Johnson knew where the shoe pinched. He told Morel that "those who have been deprived of their farms and have lost all the rights of inherited ownership for themselves and their children for one or two generations to come, can hardly find any other term for it than "alienation". He alleged that the Ibadan authorities had pleaded in vain that the land was not public land; and that even those whose land was being leased against their will had protested that they "would rather keep their farms than accept even £3 an acre paid into their pockets, for out of the land they would support themselves and their families, and have their double crops of maize, yams, beans, and the

1. HC Debs. 4s, Vol. 142, 2 March 1905, 181.

2. See Morel to Dr. Obadiah Johnson 11 March 1905. Copy F9 EDMP.

3. Morel had communicated with the BCGA on reports he received but rather warily.

perennial plantains, etc. in the markets".¹

Although the Bale probably knew what he was doing when he signed the agreement, it also appears that the BCGA took advantage of the relative illiteracy of the people of Ibadan as well. This could be illustrated by pointing to the different treatment which the BCGA received at Abeokuta. When the agents approached the Abeokuta authorities according to Dr. Obadiah Johnson, they refused to yield an inch of ground, for as they replied, there was "no public land to spare". Egbaland had a large number of citizens with sound English education who matched the machinations of the Association's agents with their own; relatively Ibadan had none! But it must be pointed out, on the other hand, that this unavailability of land to spare at Abeokuta was also largely due to the activities of its educated natives who had in the course of years individualised communal lands through their influence with the Egba Government and because most of them had ready cash with which they bought up lands from others in debt.²

This Ibadan episode, however, remained as a source of malignant rancour in the hearts of the natives who tended

1. Dr. O. Johnson to Morel, 22 April 1905, F9/ EDMP.

2. This point was mentioned in Chap. V.

to equate the roles of these commercial associations with the general and official attitudes of Englishmen towards West Africans. Dr. Johnson made this point in the same letter to Morel:

"The prevailing opinion, in these parts, of Englishmen nowadays, so far as we know them, is that they are always just and fair to anyone provided he has nothing they desire and must have - personal services or otherwise. If not always logical, they are at any rate legal, and would enact a new law to meet the exigencies of any case, and thus render quite legal an action which otherwise would be considered of doubtful morality (the equity of it never comes into consideration). Whatever it may be, nothing must stand in their way. We can only thank God that gold in paying quantity has not been discovered in this country, which would have tempted undesirable visitors to our shores ...".¹

Although Morel was wont to be sceptical of some information he received from educated natives on the West Coast, he acted promptly on this occasion. On 15 May 1905, he wrote Arthur Hutton, laying before him these complaints he had received from West Africa.² Hutton's defence of his Association followed the traditional pattern, alleging that the whole issue had been exaggerated, and pleading ignorance of the ill-treatment and hardship alleged inflicted on the natives. He accused some officials in Nigeria, particularly Sir William MacGregor and Captain Elgee, the Ibadan Resident,

1. Dr. O. Johnson to Morel, 22 April 1905, F9/ EDMP.

2. Morel to J. Arthur Hutton, 15 May 1905 Copy F9/A-B, EDMP.

of having pushed the native land rights to such an extreme that sentiment rendered it difficult to cope with. He claimed that if native arguments were followed to their logical conclusions, not even the local Government itself could acquire the necessary land for the railway since he saw the question of land required by the BCGA as exactly on the same basis, which it was not. His spurious argument that the Association wanted the land in the interest of the natives was identical with the creed of the "Radical Imperialists" who felt that barbarous races should not be allowed to stand in the way of progress.¹ Hutton argued:

"We want the land for the good of the native, and it would really be idiotic if we were to follow native prejudices to stand in the way of all progress. If you think the matter over, you will see that our plantation is on exactly the same position as the railway, and I don't think anyone, not even Captain Elgee, would argue that native prejudices should be allowed to stand in the way and prevent the construction of the railway ...".²

It is obvious that Hutton wrote in the vein of forward-going economic imperialists who wished to launch commercial bull-dozer operations on the colonies, and who justified their actions with the cant of progress and native interest. It is possible, as Hutton alleged, that Elgee was

1. See Madden, op. cit. p. 347.

2. Hutton to Morel, 16 May 1905, F.9/A-B, EDMP.

conceited and stubborn; but in this matter of cotton plantations, Elgee was not alone in opposing the activity of the Association.¹ Other government officials in Southern Nigeria, with the possible exception of Coupland-Crawford, were apathetic to cotton growing there since they claimed that other economic crops should be given priority.² It is probably true that the success of the cotton industry in Southern Nigeria would have benefited the natives; but what was relevant at that time was whether the effects of pursuing a policy directed towards providing more and more acres for cotton were not inimical to the overall lives of the natives. Morel made this point in a letter to Hutton:

"I recognise the importance of the Association having leases of land; the only point is in this case, whether the farmers on that land had been - without the knowledge of the Association - expropriated from their farms without adequate compensation, either in land elsewhere or in money".³

Hutton's tu quoque directed against the Colonial Governments was more irrelevant than explanatory, just as merely blaming the Government officials for the bad publicity his Association was receiving was unconvincing. Although he had no great personal likeness for Elgee, for example, Morel nevertheless

1. Hutton to Morel, 19 May 1905, *ibid.*

2. Rev. P.A. McDermott to Morel, 22 Aug. 1906, F9/M-N, EDMP. McDermott wrote from the Catholic Mission in Oritsha.

3. Morel to Hutton, 17 May 1905. Copy, F9/A-B, EDMP.

felt that he was doing a good work in Ibadan.

The BCGA soon earned the reputation of maltreating and exploiting natives. The Catholic Herald of August 1905 carried destructive paragraphs which implied that the Association was cheating the natives of West Africa, paying the African labourers little to nothing for a week's work. This public criticism had one effect; it forced the Council of the Association to proclaim its altruism. In a letter to the Editor of the Catholic Herald, Hutton pointed out that the object of the BCGA in West Africa was "the establishment of cotton cultivation as a native industry", arguing that "it would be very shortsighted if we were to go and injure the very people whom we are looking ^{on} to grow cotton for us in future years".¹ Although it has been seen that the private business of the Association on the West Coast did not always correspond with either its original policy or public protestations, yet it appears that some of these adverse comments were made by those enemies of the BCGA who

1. Hutton to Editor of Catholic Herald Aug. 1905, copy F9/A-B EDMP encl. in Hutton to Morel, 1 Sept. 1905. See also BCGA Pamphlet No. 157, 1914. Hutton claimed that the BCGA paid the highest possible price to the natives which was untrue. In March 1904 L. Probyn suggested to the C.O. that the BCGA should pay the natives 1²d. per lb. instead of 1d. The BCGA and its agents demurred. See L. Probyn to C.O., 2 March 1904 and minutes CO 520/28.

wanted not only to score economic points against it but also to win a moral victory if the economic one failed them. The great success which the BCGA had achieved in growing Sea Island cotton in the West Indies¹ had frightened some American planters who feared that the Association would destroy the virtual American monopoly of supply.² Some of these interests, notwithstanding the imperfections of the Association, were more concerned with injuring the BCGA than with ameliorating the alleged plight of the natives.

Unlike the other economic enemies of the Association,

1. While lamenting the failure of the BCGA operations in West Africa, F.G.A. Butler paid glowing tributes to the success of the Association in the West Indies due to Sir Daniel Morris: "... The only part of the world in which so far the efforts of the new cotton-growing movement have been successful is the West Indies. The results there have been astonishing for the size of the district, and the success is by universal consent attributed to the presence and ability of Sir Daniel Morris. He is a sort of presid genius to whom everyone can turn when in doubt; he is full of energy, always ready and able to give advice and direct experiment, and most enthusiastic about the movement. He exhibits, in fact, that combination of skill and force which I think is conspicuous by its absence in the cotton-growing movement in West Africa ...". Minute of 21 Jan. 1905 by F.G.A. Butler, on BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.
Morris, Sir Daniel, K.C.M.G. (1908); C.M.G. (1893); M.A. D.C.L. D.Sc-LL.D., F.L.S., F.R.H.S.1 V.M.H., C.M.Z.S. born in Glamorgan 26 May 1844; Educ. At Cheltenham; Royal Coll. of Sciences, S. Ken.; T.C.D. 1st cl. Natural Science; Gold Medallist. Directed Agric. & botanic stations in many countries. Died 9 Feb. 1933.

2. Hutton to Morel, 1 Sept. 1905, F9/A-B, EDMP.

Holt's opposition to the BCGA stemmed from other considerations the validity of which were not so much undermined by his personal involvement. Economically, he felt that he could not take any interest in a scheme which sought with £50,000 to increase the world's supply of cotton, and to embrace the world in its area of experiments. His cramped economic ideas gave him no enthusiasm to spend his money or time to cheapen the price of cotton for the world. He expressed his economic opinion tinged with humanitarian gesture to Morel:

"It is as much as I can do to think of growing cotton in Africa, not to make it cheap in Europe, but to give the native another outlet for his energies and provide a new field for the use of British capital. Cheapness will not help that operation. Dearness would be more likely to give the desired result. The proposed aims of these philanthropists would justify the employment of £5,000,000 rather than £50,000".¹

But Holt regarded the BCGA as a windscreen shielding the personal aggrandisement of Sir A.L. Jones and his "band-waggon of flashy imperial patriots", a feeling which was later justified. He had openly shown his suspicion of the whole movement when on 26 June 1907 he had been invited to a cotton dinner; to the general praise of the cotton movement sung by those present, Holt said nothing. After the dinner, he expressed his disgust to Morel:

1. Holt to Morel, 20 June 1905, F8/2, EDMP.

Note that the capital of the BCGA was later raised from £50,000 to £500,000

"I have not associated myself with that movement and don't intend to as I regard it as another affair of Jones promoted for his own advertisement chiefly and accompanied by the usual hypocritical humbug of imperialism, patriotism and such-like catchwords, the purpose of which is personal and material ends".¹

When, previously, Morel had advised him to collaborate with Jones over the cotton affair, Holt utterly refused. He had great suspicion of everything Jones was engaged in. He alleged that he could only "work well enough with him if it be absolutely for other people's good without any selfish interest to attain on either side". He cynically brought up his previous fate at Jones' hands² to justify his present negative attitude; he said that he was not so young, inexperienced and credulous to believe in the bona fides of people whom he did not know or whom he knew too well because he might have suffered through their insincerity and breach of faith. He amplified his attitude to the BCGA, warning Morel not to be deceived by Jones:

"I am not with either him or Hutton on it. I do not object to it, but there is no reason why I should shout and tell people what I do not believe. It was the same over the gold mines. I am not going to be

1. Holt to Morel, 26 June 1907, F8/3, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 5 Nov. 1902, F8/2, EDMP.
For the smart game which Jones played on Holt over the purchase of a ship from the African Association, see P.N. Davies, Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade, (Unpublished, Liverpool M.A. Thesis, 1964).

dishonest to please anybody. I do not want anyone to put money into Africa and lose it through my advice. I am not going to put a bit into attract others to follow suit. If Lancashire was really in earnest, it would not be £10,000 or £20,000 that would be subscribed to start this new industry. Would not Jones himself put £100,000 in it to give his steamers freight if he thought there was a margin even to pay expenses - not to speak of profit? Don't be deluded ...".¹

There is no doubt that Holt's attitude was partly influenced by his correct economic diagnosis of the weak potentiality of the BCGA in West Africa. But he was particularly convinced that the Association was mainly an affair of Jones trumped up to serve other ends.

There is some evidence to support Holt's view. Jones, at the time when the Association was in its infancy, had carried cotton seeds to West Africa free of freight charges. It was alleged that a few years after, he proceeded to charge fantastic rates to recover economically whatever public show of munificence he had previously made. It was found that whereas the rate of freight on cotton carried by the Atlantic liners from New York to Liverpool was 24/3d. per ton; that from Lagos to Liverpool by Sir Alfred Jones' ships was 51/4d. per ton. People then suspected that this high freight rates helped to retard the progress of the cotton movement which was announced to be a non-profit-making concern,

1. Holt to Morel, 5 Nov. 1902 F8/2, EDMP.

while at the other end of the line its President was making fantastic profits on its operation as Chairman of another business.¹ Holt's cynicism, therefore, would seem to have been based on hard facts when he wrote to Morel criticising this disparity in rates:

"How any man of common decency can charge such a rate whilst at the same time proclaiming at his banquets and through the press at every opportunity, the wonderful work he is doing for the Empire in general and the development of West Africa in particular, passes one's comprehension unless he takes the public for fools who are guided by boasters and self-advertisers instead of by deeds. It is the Congo trick of bad and hypocritical professions backed by doles of philanthropy sufficiently important and frequent to attract attention whilst the real objects are in concealed operation - and the end of all is more wealth and power ...".²

If Holt was opposed to the BCGA because of Jones' involvement in it, he was particularly averse to the manner the Association's work was alleged done in West Africa. He believed, perhaps, too readily, the evidence which came to him from Northern Nigeria that Agents of the BCGA resorted to a system of forced labour for growing cotton there. He advised Morel to watch out and publish in the West African Mail rumours that the Association had brutalised natives. He described this system of native exploitation in the same letter to Morel:

1. African Mail, 14 Dec. 1906. Also Chap. VII.

2. Holt to Morel, 2 March 1906, F8/3, EDMP.

"The men who are in the Niger growing cotton in some districts, I am credibly informed, would on no account grow the cotton except under compulsion. The people dare not object to grow it because the Government tell them to do it. The village chiefs in their turn tell them that the Government has ordered this to be done, and out of fear these men go on planting cotton and receive no compensation in any way commensurate with the work done. They complain loudly at the pittance they get for the work they have put on the cotton plantations and get what is called their pay ..".¹

Holt's views, which it may be pointed out, had some personal motives, reflected the allegations which other commercial agents in Northern Nigeria had made, to the effect that the BCGA forced natives to grow cotton in preference to other crops more beneficial to them. An agent of Siegler's at Baro, in a letter to the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber, had criticised the work of Government officials in Northern Nigeria, who, he alleged, migrated from one province to another, preaching the virtues of cotton-growing to the natives. He claimed that other agents not engaged in cotton culture also accused the Government of Northern Nigeria of forcing the natives to grow cotton at the expense of such crops as Groundnuts and palm nuts and kernels, shea butter and nuts; and alleged that this application of force had directly led to the failure by the natives to gather Palm Nuts. According to him, the cotton movement

1. Holt to Morel, 13 July 1906, F8/3, EDMP.

there was prosecuted with such vigour that other commercial agents not engaged in cotton (and Holt's agents were among these) protested to the officials. This particular agent of Sieglers had personally protested with the Resident of Nupe and also with the High Commissioner when they visited Baro during their "country wide" tour when they expostulated the case for the extension of cotton planting before the natives of that area.¹

As was to be expected, the agents of the BCGA combatted this antagonism. In August 1907, a certain John Percival, a representative of the Association in Northern Nigeria, lodged a complaint to Arthur Hutton, that traders in Northern Nigeria were opposed to the operations of the Association.² Consequently in October of the same year Hutton sent Holt this correspondence which implied a protest.³ But Holt was still of the opinion that it was "possible that some of the officials in Northern Nigeria may be a bit too zealous over cotton growing to the neglect of other cultivated products of greater value to the native worker, the commerce of the country, and eventually to the revenue of

1. Ref. to in Hutton to Holt, 3 Oct. 1907, 22/1, JHP.

2. John Percival to Hutton 31 Aug. 1907 encl. in Hutton to Holt, 3 Oct. 1907, 22/1, JHP.

3. Hutton to Holt, 3 Oct. 1907, 22/1, JHP.

the Government. In other words, it is possible to overdo cotton growing like other good things and to do less than the greatest good to the humble tropical worker in our dependencies".¹ It should be pointed out that these doubts were equally entertained by a few officials in the Colonial Office. For example, Sidney Olivier, although he did not rule out a better future for the Sierra Leone cotton had nevertheless minuted, "... It is quite possible that we may find that (as in Gambia) the natives prefer to grow groundnuts or other products to cotton at the price they will get ...".²

However, whatever might have been the effects on natives of this excessive zeal shown by the BCGA, one must not fail to point out that some of these commercial agents not primarily engaged in cotton culture were merely trumping up charges against the BCGA in order to feather their own economic nests. Having virtually failed in its efforts to grow cotton by plantation methods in Southern Nigeria, the Association concentrated its activity in Northern Nigeria, where Lugard had advised that this could only succeed through

1. Holt to BCGA, (Manchester), 3 Oct. 1907, copy, 22/1, JHP.

2. Minute of 6 Feb. 1905, by S. Olivier, on BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.

peasant cultivation.¹ Also unlike in the South, the officials in the North fully cooperated in convincing natives that cotton was a most useful crop in their economy. It is probable that the planting of cotton diverted native labour (even if it could be argued that the season for groundnut planting, and harvesting was distinct from that of cotton), especially in the light of the vigorous spirit with which officials and the agents of the Association canvassed the merits of cotton growing. But the subversive diatribes against the BCGA were not always proved. There is no clear evidence to show that the Government policy in Northern Nigeria was one of coercion. It is probable that Residents merely used their power of persuasion in asking natives to grow cotton on trial, and not generally at the expense of other farm crops; though one would also suspect that want of commensurate official zeal for other crops meant that the natives would regard the Government's persuasion as an order which probably carried with it the threat of a punitive expedition.

It must be noted, however, that others who wanted the superiority of British cotton industry maintained were

n 1. For the operations of the BCGA in Northern Nigeria, See A.O. Anjorin, British Occupation and Development of Northern Nigeria, 18 - 1914, (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis 1966) pp. 180-203.

not in favour of the Imperial grants given to the BCGA. Thus while the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl of Scarborough in 1906 were asking the Earl of Elgin to continue the work of his predecessor by subsidising the BCGA and extending the railway in Northern Nigeria,¹ and G.A. Arbuthnot in 1910, praising the Government for the annual grant of £10,000 just given to the BCGA,² the demand by the Earl of Ronaldshay that there should be a proper "agreement" for this subscription³ was surely ominous.

Moreover, the manner in which the BCGA conducted its West African operations disillusioned even the officials who were favourably disposed to the cotton movement. The BCGA asked the Colonial Office for one relief after another, starting from 'all technical restrictions on importation of cotton implements and appliances, and for relief from import duties',⁴ to free rail transport.⁵ It asked for monopoly of

1. HL. Debs., 4s, Vol. 156, 1906, 1428, 1429-35.

2. HC. Debs., 5s, Vol. XV, 1910, 883-7.
Arbuthnot, Gerald Archibald; born 19 Dec. 1872, oldest son of Major-Gen. Wm. Arbuthnot. Educ. privately. Naval Service 1892. Private Sec to Rt. Hon. Walter Long M.P. 1894, also in that capacity 1895, 1900; Vice President Budgetary Protest League 1909; M.P. (Unionist) Burnley 1910; Vice-Chancellor Primrose League, 1912. Belonged to Carlton. Died Sept. 1916.

3. HL. Debs., 5s, Vol. XV, 1910, 892.
 The BCGA in 1910 received an Imperial Grant of £10,000 a year for 3 yrs. See CO 96/503, Treasury to CO, 6 Jan. 1910

4. e.g. BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 96/437

5. BCGA to C.O., 6 Feb. 1905, Minutes by Butler 17 Feb., Antrobus, 21 Feb., CO 96/437.

ginning¹ and received colonial and imperial grants even when some colonial officials felt that there was no justification for them.² Persistent letters from the BCGA soliciting one exemption after another plagued and infuriated the Colonial Office officials.³ But it was the frequent failures of the Association's crops that were specially referred to. On 21 January 1905, F.A.G. Butler criticised the BCGA operations in West Africa: "... We have this failure in Sierra Leone.

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1. BCGA to C.O., 9 Nov. 1906, CO 520/40.
 2. Minute by J.G.A. Butler on BCGA to CO. 23 March 1907, CO 267/500. In this minute, Butler points that L. Probyn "says in his minute on BCGA that he thinks that there is no justification for continuing a grant to the BCGA ...".
 3. On 1 Feb. 1905, plagued by the Association's letters reminding the C.O. of its alleged promises of exemptions at a conference, Butler angrily minuted: "... We cannot expect the BCGA to set the Thames on fire so long as they prefer to trust their recollections of an imaginary conference rather than look up correspondence ...". See BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 96/437. Gradually BCGA's letters became more incessant and more annoying to the C.O. On 6 Nov. 1907 Strachey minuted to Antrobus, "You did your best at the meeting to stop the BCGA (or rather Mr. Hutton) from sending these foolish letters, but without effect ..." on BCGA to C.O., 17 Oct. 1907, CO 520/55. A few months after Antrobus was nauseated by repeated demands from the BCGA. "This sort of correspondence is a great waste not only of our time but also of Mr. Hutton's". On BCGA to C.O., 9 Jan. 1908, CO 520/73.

There has been a similar failure in the Sobo plains in Southern Nigeria, and the Association have abandoned the plantation there in order to start another in the untried district of Uromi, although Professor Dunstan, after a most elaborate analysis of the soils and conditions of the Sobo Plains, thinks that the Association have not given the district a fair trial. In Lagos, we have as yet no actual failure, but *manager succeeds manager with bewildering rapidity*, and the task of each seems to be to report upon and remedy the misdoings of his predecessor. I cannot help thinking that this chaotic state of things betrays the lack of some one controlling influence capable of mapping out a definite line of action and of seeing that the various agents employed work in with the general scheme The West African experts and managers engaged by the Association are mediocre men. They may be quite good as far as their capabilities go, but their capabilities do not go far ...".¹ Sidney Oliver was rather of the opinion that it was the bad organisation inherited from A.L. Jones that ruined the Association. He scornfully minuted: "The operations of the Association in West Africa have the slant of Sir A. Jones' methods. Big scheme; big talk - big capital: and then this thing coming to work itself

1. Minute of 21 Jan. 1905 by F.G.A. Butler, on BCGA to C.O., 12 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.

with any one who can be picked up and labelled an "expert".
 Results - Lots of money wasted and no real start made.
 Great cry and little work .. He is too big a man for details
 and too easily satisfied that anyone will do to man his
 schemes .. In fact, having served my time as an agricultural
 missionary in the tropics, I find myself amazed at the light-
 heartedness of expenditure with which money have been embarked
 in this business ..".¹

The importance of the movement for colonial cotton
 supply was matched by an equally increasing demand for other
 tropical products, notably rubber and palm oil and kernels,
 which had the effect of bringing West Africa more into the
 economic gaze of the European public. The battle of economic
 ideas which had loomed large on the imperial horizon since
 Chamberlain fired the imagination of his countrymen with the
 abundant potentialities of the tropical "estates" was soon
 reduced to two contending philosophies struggling for mastery.
 The crucial issue was whether the traditional British policy
 in West Africa of allowing natives to develop these products ~~was~~
 assisted by technical instructions from the colonial admini-
 strations should prevail, or whether the other selfish,
 immoral and eventually uneconomic policy of taking the

1. Minute of 22 Jan. 1905 by S. Olivier, *ibid.*

development out of the hands of natives and running the economy in the interests of European speculators and financial corporations with hired native labour, would win the day. It was a gigantic fight mainly directed against huge economic interests with power to damage those standing on their way. Started as a fight behind the public scenes, it perforce came to the open when the menace of commercial adventurism proved well-nigh irresistible. Though they did not always see eye to eye with each other's methods, the Third Party was supported by the APS and later by the amalgamated society in alerting the Colonial Office to stand up to the traditional policy.

The unscrupulous drive for arboricultural concessions which had rendered the West African land question almost unanswerable, particularly on the Gold Coast, was so pervasive that native welfare was severely threatened. By discussing the role of representative syndicates and the economic ideas and activities of commercial adventurers, one feels the ethos of the commercial world of those days. But it is the insistent vigilance of British humanitarian conscience that lays bare the feverish sordidness of these commercial speculations.

In November 1906, it came to the notice of the British Parliament that a syndicate, the British West Africa Produce Company, had obtained enormous concessions in Sierra Leone. It was a huge monopoly covering over 4000 sq. miles

of territory, giving the company sole and exclusive rights to mine and procure substances of commercial value, to collect, plant, and reap vegetable products, to cut timber, erect buildings, make roads, bridges and railways, while the chiefs were alleged to have guaranteed labour.¹ In essence, it was a badly disguised rubber concession.² When it was discovered that Sir Frederick Cardew, who, as Governor of the Colony had been venomously attacked by the Third Party and various Chambers of Commerce for his alleged blunders and incompetence during the Hut Tax crisis, was Chairman of this new Company, these transactions were subjected to more intimate and persistent questionings.

It appears that in 1901, the area concerned had been granted by the protectorate chiefs to the famous five Thompson brothers³ of Sierra Leone. Through the conventional system of territorial transfers, the concession was sold to a certain Edward Brunner, who had formed a company, the Sierra Leone Plantations Company Limited, to purchase and cultivate vegetable products in the colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone, having acquired, as they alleged, twenty concessions

1. HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 165, Nov. 1906, 386.

2. Holt to Morel, 28 Oct. 1906, F8/3, EDMP.

3. HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 165, 1906, 386.

or leases from the Union African Company in 1901.¹ In February 1905, Edward Brunner wrote to the Colonial Office asking that certain amendments, favourable to the interpretation of these concessions, might be made in the laws of Sierra Leone, and that Certificates of Validity in regard to their agricultural rights might be granted.² The Colonial Office was not impressed with this demand. Cox was suspicious of "this concession over lands as big as Yorkshire".³ Sidney Olivier sarcastically remarked that "the prospectus as drafted is a document which could justify the victory of any such scheme" and he advised that the office should not give Edward Brunner "the slightest encouragement"⁴ since to sanction such concessions would be entirely contrary to sound public policy", seeing that "the prospectus is a transparent and clumsy claptrap to catch investors".⁵ The Colonial Office told Brunner that his request could not be complied with.⁶ No further correspondence seems to have passed between the

1. Ibid; also HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 167, 1906, 1022.

2. HC. Debs. 4s. Vol. 167, 1906, 1022.
Edward Brunner to C.O. 18 Jan. 1905, CO 267/482.

3. Minute of 27 Jan. 1905, (ibid).

4. Minute of 21 Jan. 1905 by S. Olivier (ibid).

5. Minute of 17 Feb. 1905 by Olivier (ibid).

6. C.O. to E. Brunner, 25 Feb. 1905, CO 267/482.

Concessionaires and the Colonial Office but Edward Brunner on 25 Feb. 1905 had had interviews with officials who although they found it impossible to encourage him to hope that the concessions he held could be legalised, nevertheless told him to resubmit an application for recognition of his concession 'on a reasonable scale'.¹ It appears also that before this date an application had been made, in October 1904, to the Sierra Leone Concessions Court to have these concessions declared valid by that Court, but was withdrawn without any pronouncement being made by the Court upon them.² Since concessions purporting to grant rights in or over land, minerals, precious stones, timber, rubber or other products of the soil, required the validation of the Concessions Court of the Colony, it appeared that the concession in question was illegal. Two other issues made this concession more revolting to many members of parliament; the connection of Frederick Cardew with the Company that ultimately took this concession over; and the fact that in 1902 the Sierra Leone Governor, Leslie Probyn had passed an Ordinance in the protectorate prohibiting any person from holding concessions in respect of forest produce in excess of 40 sq. miles, a

1. Minute of 25 Feb. by S. Olivier, CO 267/482.

2. HC. Debs. 4s. Vol. 167, 1906, 1022.

revelation which tended to justify Holt's suspicion that these protective Ordinances merely shut out genuine competitors while opening the forests to favoured monopolists.¹

People were, therefore, particularly opposed to this concession which Rev. J.T. Roberts of the Sierra Leone Auxilliary had seen as very objectionable and irregular. Holt felt bitterly against this affair when he wrote angrily to Morel:

"Under the pretext of giving the natives plants of new products, they are to have the disposal of every produce that may be of value excepting palm tree, kola tree produce and rice. This is far-reaching. The thing is not honest I fear. And a Liberal Government is allowing it! Is this sort of thing to go on in all our Colonies? If so the whole of them will soon be parcelled out amongst a lot of London sharks intent on share engineering and Stock Exchange gambling. There will soon be no room left for anybody but the concessionaire after the style of the French Congo. It all comes because of our desperate hurry. We have not the patience to develop slowly as we have done so well on the Coast. Why can we not follow the example which has worked so well for our trade in the past, but that we must needs go monopoly hunting? It is the East African craze which has now crossed the Continent - originally imported from South Africa, we shall soon see the whole country in the hands of a lot of harpies on these lines. I am really sorry to see it. Look out next for all the same thing in the Gold Coast, Northern Nigeria etc., and watch your BCGA. I distrust much all these patriots and philanthropists ...".²

Supported by Holt's moral inspiration, Morel opened a campaign in the West African Mail against concessions in

1. HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 165, 1906, 386.

2. Holt to Morel, 28 Oct. 1906.

general and the Sierra Leone one in particular. Describing it as "a most objectionable monopoly", Morel attacked the ambiguity and the vagueness of that company's prospectus, caricatured the tiny sum which it alleged the natives and government would receive for these apparently extensive rights to timber, rubber and other produce for 99 years. He then exhorted the Government to give freedom, protection and encouragement to capital and enterprise so that trade would penetrate into the heart of Africa, and thus decrease the danger of concessions obtained merely to attract capital which were directed more for Stock Exchange operations than for real, just and equitable commercial transactions.¹

The matter was taken up by humanitarians and Radicals in parliament, notably Sir Charles Dilke. Dilke, whose cooperation Morel had sought in the campaign "to keep the trade monopolists out of British West Africa",² was already opposed to monopolies and concessions. Since his unwilling provisos that if granted at ^{all} these concessions should be small in area, short in time, and subject to close scrutiny ...".³ were not satisfied by the Sierra Leone

1. West African Mail, 9, 30 Nov. 1906.

2. Morel to Dilke, 28 Nov. 1906, copy F.S./EDMP.

3. See Dilke's paper on 'Concessions' in Papers of the Native Races Conference of July 1911. (Ed. G. Spiller) pp. 321-322.

concession, he joined others in asking questions. On the 19 November 1906, D.M. Smeaton, making his debut as Liberal M.P., sketched the history of the dubious transactions in which Fred Cardew was involved, lampooning the pretensions of the Company and pointing out its threat to native rights. He implied that the Colonial Office was guilty of dereliction of duty when he insisted that it should have interfered to prevent the "underlings of companies" being "believed by "the ignorant natives to be acting with Government authority".¹ On the same day ^{another member} C.H. suggested that, having regard to the fact that the person principally concerned, (now Chairman and Managing director of the Company) was formerly the Governor of the Protectorate, a circular should be issued to all governors advising them not to identify themselves, after they had ceased to be governors, with commercial undertakings in the country where they had served. Questions were so persistent that Churchill even agreed that this rather wide measure was contemplated.² In December of the same year,

1. HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 165, 1906, 386, 387.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie, Born 9 Sept. 1848, son of D.J. Smeaton of Abbey Park. Educ. St. Andrews Univ. (M.A.); of Indian Civil Service 1867-84; Burma Leg Co., 1898-1902. Liberal M.P. for Stirlingshire from 1906. Vice-President North Hants Liberal Federation; President Basingstoke Liberal Association. Died 19 April 1910.

2. HC. Debs. 4s. Vol. 165, 1906, 386, 387.

members persisted in their questionings, searching into the legal and human implications of these concessions. Churchill then told the Commons that no opinion had been taken by the Colonial Office legal advisers on these concessions at the time when the chiefs sold them or when the prospectus of the Company name was issued, and that the Governor of Sierra Leone would be told to watch the operation to prevent any illegalities or abuses.¹

Members of Parliament, however, were not convinced. Other individuals outside Parliament, typically John Holt, believed that Churchill was either ignorant of the details of these operations or was deliberately misleading Parliament. Holt emphasised the likelihood of the latter view:

"The danger is that some of the Colonial Office people may be conniving after the thing as the Foreign Office have done over similar sinister doings in Uganda. When shall we get honest and strong Ministers who will have the courage to make a public example of a few of these official sharks? They exist in everyone of our Government Departments and are a danger and a disgrace to the State ...".²

It is, of course, true, as Antrobus privately told Morel, that it was not always easy to give full explanations within the limits of the answer to a Parliamentary Question.³

1. HC. Debs. 4s. Vol. 167, 1906, 1021, 1022.

2. Holt to Morel, 13 Nov. 1906, F8/3, EDMP.

3. Antrobus to Morel, 4 Feb. 1907, private, F9/A-B, EDMP.

At times, questioners did not always master their facts and therefore started from an erroneous stand-point, thus affording the Government a means of escape. Though this factor could not palliate the gravity of the case against the Colonial Office for actually conniving at the concession, it was clear that members were unaware of the fact that the validity of these concessions rested with the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone and not the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office must be blamed in the final resort, for knowing that these alleged concessions were 'objectionable' and 'inexpedient in the interests of the natives of the Colony generally',¹ but allowing itself to be hedged in by technicalities. In spite of Churchill's studied eloquence, members of parliament persistently pointed at the dubious role of Cardew, "the crank", making broad hints of undue influence in these transactions. Even Antrobus, who had told Morel that he believed Cardew was "not influenced by any unworthy motive" by being connected with the Company, yet seemed very worried with the whole thing; his sarcastic view that Cardew's feelings "had always been that he was so honest himself that he didn't always recognise a rogue when he met one",² was most revealing.

1. Minute of 7 Jan. 1907 by J. Anderson on Geo. Dickinson & Co. 28 Dec. 1906, CO 267/91.

The forlorn humanitarian struggle against the honoured illegality of the British West Africa Produce Company monopoly was contemporaneous with the reckless attempt made by a certain Robert Brown to seize tribal forests in Ijebu Ode under the plea of 'Concessions' agreement with the Awujale. This time it was the APS that alerted the Colonial Office and the British public. It appears that on 5 October 1906, Robert Brown had obtained the signature of the Awujale and Chiefs of Ijebu Ode in the Western Province of Nigeria to an agreement purporting to assign him the right of prospecting for timber, during a term of six months, over an area of, approximately, 600 square miles, with the option of taking possession of such portion of the forested land as he might hereafter desire to purchase at the rate of £1 per square mile. It was believed that the Awujale received a present of £20 in exchange for his present of two sheep and a "turkey", and was understood to imply in the agreement that he did not grant more than prospecting rights for six months specified in the "agreement".

Shortly afterwards, however, Robert Brown attempted to expell from the forest, over which he had acquired mere prospecting rights, several native traders who were there cutting mahogany in accordance with long-established custom, and who were assured by Lt. Herne, the D.C. in charge of that

area, that Brown had no power to interfere with them unless, at the end of the six months prospecting period, he obtained a concession on the term alleged consented to by the Awujale on behalf of his people. It appears that on 22 April 1907, Captain Wood, who had succeeded Lt. Herne, as the local Commissioner, had informed the Awujale that the Governor of Lagos had modified the terms of Brown's 'concession' to the extent of allotting to him only 100, instead of the 600, square miles of forest land, and that the Awujale must sign a new document assigning to Brown absolute ownership of this restricted (but probably richest) area, evidently without receiving any payment for the same, even at the former hypothetical rate of £1 per square mile. This the Awujale declined to do, alleging that he had no power to sign away the property of others, towards whom he was only in the position of a trustee. Thereupon, Captain Wood was alleged to have angrily informed the Awujale and the Chiefs that the 'Concession', whether they signed it or not, would hold good. Persevering in the same attitude, Captain Wood on 25 April of the same year, summoned the principal native traders, and severely reprimanded them for holding meetings calculated to stop the trade of the district. When one of their members ventured to justify the native traders' proceedings, he was alleged to have been struck by Captain Wood, with the result that in the turmoil that ensued, all the traders were tem-

porarily arrested and then ignominiously expelled with the threat of more severe punishment if they made further complaints or offered further resistance to the proceedings of Robert Brown.

The Awujale immediately lodged his respectful appeal to Sir Walter Egerton for protection, but the Lagos Governor appointed a Commission of Inquiry on 2 May of that year. The Acting Commissioner for the province, Copeland-Crawford, who opened the inquiry on 10 May, did not seem to have visited Ijebu Ode with an open mind. He appeared to have made no attempt to convince the people of Ijebu Ode either that the sanction of the Awujale and his Chiefs was originally obtained to the so-called 'concession', or that it would be illegal if the people did not consent to the transaction. Rather, he contented himself with insisting on compliance with the instruction of the British authorities, warning the protesting natives of the perils they would incur by further opposition, and inviting them to accept service under Brown for what pay he was willing to offer them.¹

In August 1907, the APS memorialised Lord Elgin in the light of these anomalies, demanding "more searching investigation" and condemning "the dictatorial and offensive

1. Aborigine's Friend, Oct. 1907.

conduct of the officials concerned".¹ By however mentioning that the transaction was a sale or confiscation of land, the APS raised an agonising issue, and gave the Colonial Office an excuse to temporise in a matter, as it alleged, that infringed no native land rights. Thus Strachey minuted:

"... There is no question of the transfer of any rights of ownership of land, the point in dispute being whether Mr. Brown has the sole right to cut timber within an area of 100 sq. miles subject to certain conditions as to payment to the Chiefs and the government on account of every tree felled".²

The APS in another memorial opposed this academic interpretation of the deal. Making a practical assessment of the transaction, it correctly maintained that a 'concession' might prove to be a 'sale'. It argued:

"Any concession of exclusive rights to cut timber throughout a specified area of forest land, without any time limit, is, if not strictly equivalent to an absolute concession of that land, similar in its present effects, and certain to be so regarded in perpetuity or for so long a time as the property is of any value to the concessionaire"³

The APS view carried weight. The Colonial Office was now beginning to see the practical implications of such 'concessions', although it excused itself from intervention by pointing at irrelevant technicalities. Butler minuted

1. APS to Elgin, 6 Aug. 1907, CO 520/55.

2. Minute of 7 Aug. by Strachey, *ibid*.
See also C.O. to APS, 19 Aug. 1907, CO 520/55.

3. APS to C.O., 23 Aug. 1907, CO 520/55.

accordingly:

"No doubt the APS are right. An exclusive concession to cut timber in a forest tract would be a very much the same thing in the eyes of the ordinary native or in its effects on him as the alienation of the land for the term of the concession. But as far as we know, the Awujale and Chiefs have not signed the further agreement which is apparently necessary to make the grant of such a concession technically effective in this case and it would seem that they have no intention of doing so".¹

There can be no doubt that the affair, at least from the London official view, appeared 'fluid and uncertain', but what seemed uppermost in the mind of the Colonial Office was that Robert Brown had probably satisfied the requirements of the Forest Ordinance, and was in any case, supported by the 'men on the spot' who had a thorough grasp of the transaction. The Ijebu Ode affair, however, caused much protest in Lagos, and was one of the issues cited by Bishop Johnson for the necessity of a local Auxiliary of the London Society.²

These desperate attempts to procure tropical products, notably, timber, cotton and rubber, corresponded with the commercial importance of another raw material, namely, palm produce. The Palm fruit consists of a number of spiky cones. There is a soft pulpy substance inside of it

1. Minute of 28 Aug. 1907 by F.G.A. Butler, *ibid*.

2. See Chap. IV. For the impact of the Brown affair on Ijebu Society see O.O. Ayantuga, Ijebu and Its Neighbours 1851-1914, (Unpublished, London Ph.D. thesis, 1965) pp. 326-328.

known as the pericarp which is composed of palm-oil proper, a thick yellow stuff. Inside this pulpy covering is a nut. The kernel inside the nut also contains oil of a purer kind. Palm-oil and the palm-kernel oil were used largely in the manufacture of soap and candles. But Chemists discovered that by refining the palm-kernel oil it was also edible, and so it became the principal base in the manufacture of margarine and various other nut-butters. Consequently, upon the increasing demand for the product by manufacturers of soap came the demand for it by the manufacturers of margarine and nut-butters. The manufacturers of soap, therefore, had a formidable interest to compete with for the raw material, but for those who manufactured both soap and butters, this discovery gave them a greater opportunity for more economic gains and more incentive to procure these raw materials.

Before European industrialists tried to introduce new ideas to West Africa, the industry had operated in a native way. The natives prepared the palm-oil and brought it to the merchants who shipped it as palm-oil. They also cracked the nuts and brought the kernels to the merchants as kernels. Liverpool used to take most of the palm-oil and the vast majority of the kernels went to Hamburg to be re-distributed among the great palm-kernel crushing mills in Europe, particularly in Germany. The revolution which beset this

economic system was largely due to the commercial ideas of Sir William Lever and his opponents.¹

Sir William Lever was always in need of regular raw materials for his soap manufactures and with the improved utility of palm-kernel oil, the scope of his manufactures was widened. From the time he started searching for raw materials, he had always believed that Africa was a potential supplier. In the early years of 1902 one of his research workers on the West Coast had reported to him that there was "an inexhaustible supply of Palm Oil and Palm Kernels in the hinterland there only awaiting development and the opening up of markets". Lever believed that there was "ample margin for lower prices in all these products before the supply is checked". In 1903, another investigator, Harold Greenholgh,

1. Morel to W. Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy, F8/ Cadbury etc. EDMP.

Lever, William Hesketh, 1st Viscount Leverhulme (1851-1925), soap manufacturer; entered father's grocery business in Bolton, 1867, partner, 1872; with his brother, began to trade on his own account, specializing in soap, for which he chose the name 'Sunlight', 1884; began to manuf. it in 1885; inaugurated new town Port Sunlight, on Mersey, near Bebington, Cheshire, as centre for his works and work people 1888; Lever Bros made Ltd. Co. 1894; by purchase or interchange of shares exercised wide control over soap-making trade; Liberal M.P. Wirral Div. of Cheshire 1906-9; brought and won libel action against Northcliffe press, 1907; baronet 1911; baron 1917; Viscount 1922.

had reported the potentialities of the West Coast.¹

In order to tap these abundant resources, Lever tried two methods, namely, to secure concessions from the Colonial Office for a more effective exploitations of these potentialities, and, secondly, to enter the ancient and hazardous Coast trade if the former approach failed. As, it will be shown, the idea of concessions had a serious bearing on the native question, Lever tried his hand at the old Coast trade. But he was virtually ignorant of the method of trade which prevailed there, in particular, ^{that} in general merchandise which insured traders against incessant fluctuations in produce prices. He, therefore, decided to enter this West African trade by buying over W.B. MacIver and Co. Limited, a Liverpool firm based in Nigeria, dealing in timber. Though this firm was in desperate financial circumstances, its take-over initiated Lever into the complicated and mysterious Coast trade. Moreover, W.K. Findlay, Chairman of MacIvers, who directed Lever's West African operations, had a firm grasp of the "rascally" trade of those days. He also purchased Peter Ratcliffe and Co. which traded to Sierra Leone, and another bankrupt company called the Cavalla River Company

1. See Charles Wilson, The History of the Unil^gver: A Study in Economic Growth and Social Change, Vol. 1 (London, 1954), p. 165.

which operated mainly in Liberia. Before 1914, Findlay had launched Lever's West African enterprise on a firm basis.¹ But these developments were already influenced by new developments in Lever's economic ideas which had compelled him to demand special privileges from the Colonial Office. His aim was to tap the raw materials at their source, to set up machinery to treat the palm-oil and kernels at their place of production. This led him into protracted negotiations with the Colonial Office and others, controversy with his commercial rivals, and heated political and humanitarian protests.

Negotiations between Lever and the Colonial Office for Oil Palm concession in Sierra Leone began in 1907 when Alldridge (a retired official of the Sierra Leone service) went out on his behalf to negotiate with the Governor and the native chiefs. Alldridge's proposals commended themselves neither to the Governor, Sir Leslie Probyn, nor to the Colonial Office, since they included proposals for the grant of exclusive rights of buying the palm fruit from the natives over extensive areas at the price of £1 per ton delivered at a proposed factory. The Governor had reckoned that this proposal would give a payment of only 2½d. per day to the

1. Ibid; pp. 166-7.

natives who performed the arduous and dangerous task of gathering the fruit, while his contracts with the chiefs for the supply of native labour for the general purposes of the Company at 10 shillings a month (i.e. 3¹/₄d. a day) was found to be too much below the normal price of labour as carrier which was 7 d. per day. On 23 June 1908, Lever held an interview with Sir Leslie Probyn, Sir R.L. Antrobus and others and was told that his proposals were inadmissible, but that he should submit an amended version, which he did in the letter of 6 July 1908. These amended proposals were considered by the concessions Committee of the Colonial Office at a meeting held on 27 October 1908. It was pointed out by Colonel Seeley, the Under-Parliamentary Secretary, that what Lever asked for amounted to a practical monopoly of erecting mills for expressing oil all through the Protectorate. This was inadmissible. Lever was advised to submit alternative proposals which again he did in his letter of 31 October of the same year. These proposals were again submitted to the Concessions Committee, which advised that with certain alterations they should be submitted to the Governor for his considerations.¹

The Governor's views were received in January 1909

1. Memo by W.D. Ellis, Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros to C.O.
15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10.

restricting these demands. Consequently Lord Crewe, the then Secretary of State, decided to offer Messrs. Lever the exclusive right for 21 years to erect power mills for expressing oil within an area of 10 miles radius, and also, with the same area and for the same period, the exclusive right of erecting means of mechanical traction, except as against the Government. On 12 February Messrs. Lever replied that the Colonial Office proposals precluded the successful operation of their scheme. This was regarded by that office as having closed the matter. But in March 1910 the same Alldrige represented to the Colonial Office that Messrs. Lever wished to reopen the matter. An interview was accordingly arranged with Messrs. Lever, but it soon appeared that Alldrige's advances were unauthorised and that fresh proposals were not contemplated by Lever.¹

However, in June of the same year, Lever made private proposals to Lord Crewe for a monopoly in Sierra Leone for the use of a certain depericarping machine. Lord Crewe did not consider the suggestion really admissible, but he promised Lever that he would reconsider the question of extending to Sierra Leone by Ordinance the privileges of any patent for a depericarping machine which his firm might take

1. Memo. by W.D. Ellis, Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros. to C.O.
15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10.

out from Britain. Lever was not satisfied with this proposal; he rather desired that his own previous proposals should be reconsidered. But the Concessions Committee, somewhat influenced by the advice of Major Williams, a District Commissioner, who knew Sierra Leone well, and who considered even a partial monopoly injurious, advised that "no fresh proposals made by Messrs Lever or any other firm on the lines of previous proposals should be accepted without careful consideration and enquiry". Lever was therefore told that negotiations could not be reopened on these lines, though this did not preclude the reopening of other proposals. The matter seemed to have rested there until 20 October 1911 when Messrs Lever expressed their willingness to accept the terms offered to them on 6 February 1909. The Secretary of State therefore decided to continue negotiations on these lines, subject only to the provisional definition of the area, and to a clear statement that no grant of property in the palms or their fruit would be allowed; in other words, the nuts would have to be purchased from the natives at current prices.¹

As these Sierra Leone negotiations were going on, Lever Brothers were also carrying on different transactions with the Government of Southern Nigeria. On 21 October 1910,

1. Memo. by W.D. Ellis, Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros to C.O.
15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10

they informed the Colonial Office that they were already established in Southern Nigeria, having obtained sites in three places on the Coast (namely Lagos, Opobo, and Calabar) for the erection of oil mills for crushing Palm Kernels, and secondly that they were desirous of erecting, in the palm country of Southern Nigeria, depericarping machinery for the treatment of the whole fruit of the palm. As regards the first part of their intimation, i.e. erection of mills for crushing Palm Kernels, Lever Bros had gone ahead, their building at Lagos approaching completion by this date. It seemed, therefore, that this part of their enterprise was independent of the other.¹

As regards the second part, Lever Bros made it a condition that the distance of 20 miles round the location of each instalment of depericarping machinery should be considered as reservations for the special purpose of their proposed new enterprise, i.e. "that no other firm should be allowed to erect and establish machinery for the treatment of the whole fruit within 20 miles of our location". This proposal was sent out to the Governor for his observation. Egerton was, with certain conditions, in favour of acceding to their application. One of these conditions was that the "privileged

1. C.O. Memo by Charles Strachey 17 Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros to C.O. 15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10.

sites" should be limited to three.¹

On 7 February 1911, The Concessions Committee considered the matter. Its members did not like the idea of subjecting such a large area to the conditions asked for by Lever Bros. They pointed out that three areas of 20 miles radius would amount to 1/20th of the total area of Southern Nigeria, of which only a certain portion was palm bearing. Eventually, Lever Brothers were offered facilities, subject to the conditions laid down by the Governor, for 20 years in respect of one area of 5 miles radius. No other reply, beyond an acknowledgement, was received from Messrs. Lever by the Colonial Office, but on 14 June of the same year, it appears that Sir William Lever had an interview with the Secretary of State, when he stated that he did not propose to proceed with his application. On 20 June, however, Messrs Lever wrote to say that the alternative proposal which the Colonial Office made (in its letter of 24 Feb.) would not justify the large expenditure necessary in erecting a mill. They added that they believed that their proposals had never been properly understood, and then referred the Colonial Office to their letter of 31 October 1908 on the Sierra Leone project

1. ~~Memo.~~ by Charles Strachey 17 Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros. to C.O. 15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10

as containing a "fuller explanation".¹

On 15 November 1911, Lever wrote a very long but general letter to Harcourt referring to the greatly increasing demand for oils and fats for artificial butter and soap-making and to the fact that the major portion of the tropical zone was in non-British hands. He pointed out that the bulk of the artificial butter produced came from foreign countries, that British firms had not paid the same attention to the cultivation of oil-bearing plants and seeds as had foreigners, and that without energetic action the whole business might pass into foreign hands. He then criticised the attitude of the Colonial Office towards Lever Brothers' proposals for developing this business in West Africa.² The power of this economic argument was undermined by Lever's extravagant demands and ungracious remarks, and found officials not wholly supporting him. Sir H. Just minuted: "I should be agreeable to take the H. of Commons as arbitrator: tell them what Lever demanded, and what we replied and why and leave them to say if the C.O. deserve the remarks in this letter. But I fear Sir W.H. wouldn't be agreeable".³ Sir John Anderson, although he

1. Memo by Strachey, 17 Nov. 1911 on Lever Bros. to C.O. 15 Nov 1911, CO 554/10.

2. Lever Bros to C.O., 15 Nov. 1911, CO 554/10.

3. Minute of 18 Nov. 1911, *ibid.*

found Lever's allusions "amusing", at the same time minuted: "... There is some force in his contentions, and if only he were not so exacting we might come to terms with him. But he always wants better terms than anyone else, and forgets that our roads and railways have got to be paid for, and also the better security of enterprise under British rule. After all we profess to be in the tropics mainly for the benefit of the natives and material development is too often at their expense, while our roads and railway help him to get a better price for his produce and bring him within reach of civilization".¹

Following an interview with Harcourt, Lever on 30 November of the same year, wrote to the Colonial Office, requesting reservations of areas in the Sierra Leone protectorate, (larger than the area promised him in February 1909) and suggesting that delimitation of the areas would be settled locally after inspection by his firm representatives.² This new development chagrined the permanent officials. Ellis minuted with asperity:

"I do not know what passed at the interview. I have only to point out that Messrs. Lever are now opening their mouth wider. On 2nd October they agreed to

1. Minute of 18 Nov. 1911, *ibid*.

2. Lever Bros to C.O. 30 Nov. 1911, CO 267/537.

accept the area of 10 miles radius as sufficient for their purposes. This was the area which, after the long negotiations .. was fixed as the maximum which ought to be granted. Now they ask, in addition, for an area, 10 miles radius round Little Bumbar. I would only point out that while Yonni Station is on the route of the Central Railway which is being built, Little Bumbar is close to Rowalla and Makene to which it is proposed to carry the lines, so that with these two areas Messrs. Lever will practically monopolise the 'rich palm belt' which the Railway was designed to open up".¹

Fiddes agreed with Ellis: "Unless the S/S gave any promise² to Sir W. Lever as to (2) I think it should not be granted .. There are others in the field and we don't want to give a practical monopoly to anyone."³ Sir J. Anderson supported Fiddes, saying that "there are other Richmonds almost as powerful in the field ...".⁴ In spite of Emmott's view, as

1. Minute of 2 Dec. 1911 by W.D. Ellis, *ibid*.

2. On 7 Dec. 1912 Harcourt minuted "Lord Emmott and I made no promise of any kind to Sir W. Lever", CO 267/537.

3. Minute of 5 Dec. 1912 by Fiddes, CO 267/537

4. Minute of 5 Dec. 1912 by J. Anderson, *ibid*.
As Ellis pointed out in another minute of 11 Dec., there were about three other sets of people interested in the palm oil industry in Sierra Leone other than Lever: The Crossfields, soap manufacturers who had a representative then in S.L.; The Sierra Leone Development Syndicate in which Sir Phillips, Brunner Mond, Norton Griffiths and Co. were interested. A certain Colonel Patterson was in the Protectorate on their behalf. Major Craster, who in 1908 was establishing nutcracking mills at Manjahum and Mafakoya in the neighbourhood of the Central Railway in Sierra Leone.

favourable to Lever that "development will not take place at all if every bird in the hand is rejected for one in the bush," the permanent officials succeeded in preventing Lever from having his new proposals.

On 20 December, therefore, Lever Brothers applied to the Colonial Office for grant of areas in Southern Nigeria and the Gold Coast for establishing depericarping machinery. Like the Sierra Leone one it was vaguely stated that the precise localities would be settled later, and that as soon as selections were approved, it was proposed to ship machinery and begin operations without delay.² It must be remembered that the terms proposed to be granted in Sierra Leone were those embodied in the Colonial Office letter of 6 Feb. 1909 to Lever Bros., with a special proviso that the concession was to convey no property in the palm trees or their nuts which would have to be purchased from natives in the ordinary way. The unusual nature of Lever's application soon involved the Colonial Office in legal tangles. Although W.D. Ellis was "in favour of facilities to Messrs. Lever" since "the resources of the oil palm are being a great deal neglected by the natives", he nevertheless felt that the position in

1. Minute of 5 Dec. 1911 by Emmott, on Lever Bros. to C.O., 30 Nov. 1911, CO 267/537.

2. Lever Bros. to C.O., 20 Dec. 1911, CO 554/10.

the Gold Coast as regards such a concession as Lever wanted was "not very clear". In the first place, Ellis was of the opinion that such a proposed concession "comes prima facie under the Concessions Ordinance" because the site for the factory and the wayleaves for the Tramways were "rights over land". If this was considered a trifling area, Ellis argued that the question would arise whether the right to exclude others from doing the same thing within the area proposed (10 miles radius from a point i.e. 314 sq. mls.) was not itself a concession of that area, in which case it was in excess of the grantable area of 20 sq. miles according to the Concessions Ordinance. Secondly, he pointed out that Lever's proposals did not seem to ^{be} either agricultural or aboricultural concessions (in which case they would have specifically required the Governor's assent) but a "manufacturing concession", and therefore ~~was~~ ^{it} subject to the approval of the Supreme Court, which, however, he felt "could not be given owing to the excessive area". Thirdly Ellis argued that the word "forest" was a touchy one which could excite native animosities since the whole question of the treatment of forest lands was then sub judice. He concluded in the same minute:

".. I think we had better tell Messrs. Lever that the grant of concessions in the Gold Coast is largely regulated by the Concessions Ordinance under which grants of rights over land by natives require to be

validated by the Supreme Court, and that it seems to be a somewhat doubtful question of law whether such a concession as they propose would require such validation, and if so whether it could under the existing law be validated ..".¹

But Sir J. Anderson did not feel that the Concessions Ordinance was "at all applicable to this matter". He pointed out that all that Levers wanted was that no one else should be allowed to get up a factory within a radius of 10 miles of their own, and not rights as regards the products of the soil or the soil itself except what was covered by the factory and by their tramways. He was of the opinion that if the consent of the Government (not the Court) was required before any one could set up a factory, then all that was necessary was an agreement with the Government that they would not give their consent to any other factory within the area (though it was possible that the assent of the Court might be required for the factory site and the land required for the Tramway). He, therefore, suggested that if it was necessary to remove doubts, "we should have short Ordinances passed saying that no one may establish a factory without a license from the Government which may be issued subject to such conditions and limitations as may from time to time be prescribed by the

1. Minute of 23 Dec. 1911 by W.D. Ellis, Lever Bros to C.O.,
20 Dec. 1911, CO 554/10

Governor in Council.¹ Harcourt also surveyed the legal implications of Lever's application and supported Anderson's view of the necessity for an Ordinance. He minuted: "... Under the circumstances there seems no way of granting them the ~~exclusive~~ right except by an Ordinance ...".² Anderson was gratified and minuted: "Then we must have an Ordinance as soon as possible and the Governor should be so instructed".³

When the Governor of the Gold Coast received this instructions, he opposed the idea and wrote to Harcourt:

"... While I fully recognise the great impetus which the enterprise of a firm of the standing of Messrs. Lever Bros would, no doubt, give to the palm oil industry, while I earnestly desire to see that industry developed in order that the agricultural prosperity of the Colony should not be so dependent on cocoa as it is at present, and while I admit that if the economic methods of obtaining oil which Messrs. Lever Bros. propose to introduce were adopted elsewhere the local method of preparation of palm oil would probably become unremunerative, I view with some apprehension, as a matter of principle, the introduction of an Ordinance which in effect enables the Government to grant monopoly, and this view has been endorsed by the members of my Executive

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1. Minute of 29 Dec. 1911 by Sir J. Anderson, ~~Lever~~ Bros. to C.O. 20 Dec. 1911, CO 554/10.
 2. Minute of 29 Dec. 1911 by Harcourt, *ibid*.
 3. Minute of 29 Dec. 1911 by Anderson, *ibid*.

Council ...".¹

Harcourt's reply was, surely, a non sequitur:

".. I share your view that the grant of such privileges ought to be expressly authorised by legislation, and I have to enclose herewith a copy of a draft Ordinance which I have caused to be prepared, and which will, I am advised, confer the necessary powers upon the Governor of the Colony"²

When this transaction came to light the proposed concessions were severely attacked by Tory members of Parliament, by interested parties and by the humanitarians. The surprising thing was that Morel supported Lever. This novel attitude on the part of Morel, therefore, demands that his exact relationship with Lever should be probed and the nature of the Lever experiment, which Morel alleged would be beneficial to natives, examined.

In the summer of 1910, when Sir William Lever was closely concerned with his African enterprise, he had noticed that Morel was a great force to be reckoned with in West African matters. Therefore, he approached Morel and then

1. For details of these communications see: Correspondence respecting the Grant of Exclusive rights for the extraction of oil from Palm Fruits: Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty, Jan. 1913. (Cd 6561). For the opposition to the measure in Gold Coast Legco see G.E. Metcalfe: Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957 (Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1964) pp. 540-4.

2. Cd 6561.

sought an interview. "As we are becoming interested in the West Coast of Africa", Lever wrote to Morel, "I recognise that you have, probably, more than any other man an intimate knowledge of matters connected therewith".¹ Morel could not understand why Lever (who had regarded the action of the Congo Reform Association as hypocritical) should now seek his co-operation in African questions. It might be that Lever had come to know that it was Morel who had framed questions which Sir Charles Dilke had put in the Commons to the effect that Soap manufacturers were grabbing palm tree products in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone.² Lever might also have been worried by Morel's publicised view that the Government should limit the Gold Coast Concessions to mining only.

On 17 August 1910, at the interview which Lever had arranged, he had informed Morel that he wanted a grant for a term of years for a crushing plant in Southern Nigeria where he would have exclusive rights within a twenty miles radius. It is not known exactly the whole story of what happened at the interview, but it is clear that Lever wanted to know whether Morel had anything to do with the Colonial Office opposition to his scheme; Lever also probably induced him to

1. Lever to Morel, 28 July 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. H.K. Hudson to Morel, 28 July 1910, F9/E-L, EDMP.

promote his application by pressurising his friends at the Colonial Office.

Morel began to impress officials with Lever's venture and its utility to the Empire. He claimed that Lever's scheme was not different from the BCGA, except that Lever in this case obtained no £10,000 annual subsidy from the Government. He pointed out to Strachey that by withdrawing the cracking industry from the banks of the Rhine to the banks of the Niger, Lever would open up "tremendous future possibilities for Southern Nigeria without in any way doing an injustice to the native races. He claimed, in the same letter, that Lever was "a decent, honest, and most powerful capitalistic force", who would be "good for British West Africa".¹

Charles Strachey, however, was not over impressed with Lever's methods and schemes. He told Morel that in 1909, Lever had asked the Colonial Office not for one but five or six different concessions, including an exclusive oil mill and a railway, which would have given him a quasi-monopoly for purchasing nuts in his area. Strachey added that Lever had "also asked for practically all his things to be free of duty, .. and wanted peculiarly favourable rates on the railway

1. Morel to Strachey, 17 Aug. 1910, copy F9/P-5, EDMP.

and several other things". The Colonial Office, according to Strachey, had offered Lever a circle of quasi-monopolistic influence half the diameter he requested and for 10 years, and Lever had declined.¹

When Lever heard of these expressed views of Strachey he wanted Morel to arrange an interview between Strachey, Sir Walter Egerton (who was then on leave) and himself.² Morel, however, advised Lever to start making peace with other big merchants in Southern Nigeria who might oppose him, and the German merchants who had vested interests in the Rhineland crushing industry. He had advised Lever that British firms would challenge his attempts to procure special privileges. At the same time, however, Morel agreed to act as a contact man for Lever during his trip to West Africa, as he alleged "all for the good of West Africa".³ On 7 September 1910, Morel and Lever had another meeting.⁴

Three weeks later, however, it appeared to Morel that he was giving Lever too much support without ensuring that he would toe the Third Party Line; therefore he made

1. Strachey to Morel, 20 Aug. 1910, private, F9/P-S, EDMP.

2. Morel to Strachey, 27 Aug. 1910, copy, F9/P-S, EDMP.

3. Morel to Lever, 1 Sept. 1910, copy, F8/Lever, EDMP.

4. Lever to Morel, 2 Sept. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

the first attempt to convert Lever to his creed. He wrote to Lever: "I wonder if you have ever read the late Miss Kingsley's 'West African Studies' published by MacMillan? As you are now going to become a great power in West African Affairs, I so much wish you would read that book, written by one of the finest women that ever lived".¹ Lever, who had cannily expressed his interest in West African Colonial reforms,² now professed respect for Mary Kingsley as well.³ Therefore, Morel arranged an interview between Lever and Egerton which took place on 19 October⁴ virtually two weeks after the Morels had dined with Lever's family at "The Hill", Lever's home at Hampstead.⁵ After this interview with Governor Egerton, Lever felt all was well with his Nigeria enterprise.⁶ He assured Morel that in his proposed Nigerian concession/^{was added} a free trade clause which would prevent "Lever Brothers at the present time (and) I hope for all time from departing from the lines I had laid down", He at the same

1. Morel to Lever, 23 Sept. 1910, copy, F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Lever to Morel, 22 Sept. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP

3. Lever to Morel, 29 Sept. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

4. Lever to Morel, 29 Sept. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

5. Lever to Morel, 4 Oct. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

6. Lever to Morel, 19 Oct. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

time deceptively assured Morel that "we have never seriously entertained plantation propositions on the West Coast of Africa".¹ And, alas, he gave Morel a cheque for £100 for his African journey!²

The energetic manner with which Morel took up the cause of a monopolistic firm like Lever Brothers would suggest that there was an arrière-pensée. Although this cannot specifically be proved, the documents suggest that money probably changed hands. A more important consideration must have been political. It was already becoming very certain that Morel wanted to stand for Parliament, and the political support of William Lever was very vital for his nomination as Liberal Candidate for Birkenhead. Apart from this political solidarity which Lever's power could promote for him, Morel was of the opinion that it was better to be on good terms with such a powerful man as Lever was and then reform him from within, than to openly challenge him and get crushed. The validity of this view is illustrated in Morel's protracted attempt to reform Lever into embracing what Morel regarded as the right policy; but it was also an exercise which clearly betrayed the true economic ideas of Sir William

1. Lever to Morel, 17 Oct. 1910, F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Lever to Morel, 24 Nov. 1910, 24 July 1911, F8/Lever EDMP.

Lever.

In April 1910, Lever announced his intention of going into the Congo where he had been invited by the Belgian authorities to open up plantations. In his letter of 7 April to Morel, he had referred to African civilization with derisive sarcasm¹, but a few days later, he requested Morel to give him "any hints and suggestions with a view to our better understanding of the native, so that we may be better able to prove of service to him as well as ourselves ...".² Morel's advice was to the point. He told Lever that he was "quite satisfied that the native of tropical Africa everywhere" was "a being, under just rule, of further developing the excellent qualities he already possessed", and maintained his "fundamental conviction" that the future and happiness of the native depended "entirely upon his being able to retain possession of his land and his free unfettered right to buy and sell in the produce thereof". He added "I should feel much happier than I do now, because I am quite satisfied that your intentions towards him are just and humane".³

With these excellent views, Lever was perplexed; he

1. Lever to Morel, 7 April 1911. F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Lever to Morel, 11 April 1911. F8/Lever, EDMP.

3. Morel to Lever, 12 April 1911. copy F8/Lever, EDMP.

began to show his true colours. He did not believe that the black-man had anywhere shown the requisite organising ability to use his land. He was of the opinion, for example, that Cotton planting in Nigeria would be a hopeless failure unless the white man owned the land as a planter as in America. He was particularly opposed to Morel's idea of the black-man's happiness. To William Lever, happiness did not depend on "the possession of something" one could not develop; he endorsed John Bright's definition of happiness as "a congenial occupation with a sense of progress", and he saw no progress in the negro's natural methods. In his view, the negro in Liberia and Haiti, had not shown any organising ability and "developing and opening up large tracts of country" was not a congenial occupation for the black-man. He even quoted Miss Kingsley to support his contention against the so-called halo built on the negro: "We are apt to forget in England that it has taken us nearly two thousand years to raise ourselves from the wood and fur-skin clothing ante-Roman period to the silk hat and frock-coat", and "we have not made a better man of the Native in West Africa by enabling him in less than one generation to jump to the silk hat and frock-coat period. We have made him a worse man in my opinion". Lever, at the same time, believed that the land of the world ought to be in the possession of those people who could develop

it and its resources. He felt that a man should be judged by his ability and willingness to make use of "God's earth"; "it would serve no useful purpose for the whiteman to go and reverse the Divine Order under which intellect and mental power" ruled, developed, protected and benefitted "inferior nations".¹

With this type of idea, Morel's disagreement could not have been more emphatic. Morel soon became very suspicious of Lever's course; when a dinner was arranged at Lever's Hampstead home, to enable Roger Casement, who, according to Morel, had a "power of persuasion and a personality, an individuality, and a way of putting things which I altogether lack",² to help bring Lever to the right policy, Morel advised Casement beforehand to be on his guard.³ And in his reply to Lever's letter of 18 April, Morel protested against Lever's attempt to group him with the Philanthropic School, a result of which, he alleged, was "a combination of ill-guided educational effort and missionary teaching", which had produced and was producing the denationalised African - the "silk hat and frock coat product". But he was particularly

1. Lever to Morel, 18 April 1911. F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Morel to Casement, 12 April 1911. F8/Casement, EDMP.
For Casement see Rena Maccoll, Roger Casement (1956).

3. Morel to Casement, 20 April 1911. F8/Casement, EDMP.

opposed to Lever's views about tropical development. He told Lever that the only justification of British assumption of control over the tropics was that it should lead to the enrichment and moral and material betterment of their peoples. Such a rule should be directed towards making their land more valuable and more productive to them by giving them markets, by imparting to them the main requirements of forestry conservation and scientific agriculture. Morel summarized with a disarming logic:

".. That we should take advantage of their ignorance of what science has taught us, and take their land away from them in order to develop it for ourselves, leaving them in a position for all time of ~~as~~ hired labourers, is a policy with which I could never agree. The same logic would have justified the seizure of England 250 years ago by the Chinese because they understood the rotation of crops which we did not, and therefore could get more out of the land than we were able to do at that time. Since then we have learned the rotation of crops and many other things, largely through ideas we have borrowed from other peoples. There is no reason why the West African should not do the same ...".¹

Lever had contended that the above policy was an impracticable utopianism, failing in economic perspective and unfair to the progressive world. He had charged Morel with expressing a mere literary and theoretical view, since he did not "possess the commercial sense".² But rather than shift from his thesis,

1. Morel to Lever, 19 April 1911. copy F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Lever to Morel, 18 April 1911. F8/Lever, EDMP.

Morel amplified it; he told Lever that where a man owned his land and was his own master, he would make that land produce tenfold more than in cases where it belonged to somebody else and he was a mere labourer upon it working at a fixed wage; therefore, Morel claimed that his system was better for humanity at large since it also ensured larger productions.¹

It must be pointed out, however, that much of Lever's illustrations from West Africa were erroneous. The case of Liberia was certainly dismal; but then as, Morel also pointed out to him, Liberia certainly was an object lesson, which strengthened rather than weakened the Morel thesis. What passed under the name of Liberia was a collection of 40,000 descendants of slaves shipped back from the United States to Africa, divorced from their race, Europeanized, dumped down on the West Coast, and then expected to be anything else but what they were. Liberia was not a failure of the policy which Morel advocated; if anything, it was a testimony to the failure of the Philanthropic School, being, as Morel believed, an artificial product which had nothing to do with African life and stood wholly outside it.

If Liberia was a negative example of the truism of the 'Third Party' creed, other positive instances belied the

1. Morel to Lever, 19 April 1911. copy F8/Lever EDMP.

assumptions of Sir William Lever. In Senegal, the native, his own landowner, covered vast stretches of country with groundnut cultivation, exporting that product to the value of well over £1 million sterling annually, and extending this crop annually as railway facilities for marketing increased. In the Gambia, under the same conditions, a similar industry had sprung up. In the Gold Coast, the native, again his own landowner, had in a few years built up an export industry in cocoa which developed virtually from nothing to well over £1 million sterling per annum. Moreover, in Southern Nigeria, hundreds of thousands of natives, themselves landowners, were employed in the palm oil and kernel industry, exporting nearly £4 Million sterling annually. In the Benin District of Southern Nigeria, in no fewer than 700 villages, at the suggestion and with the technical help of the Forestry Department, the natives established communal plantations of Funtumia Elastica which in 1911 was estimated at £200,000. From the revenues derived from tapping rubber and other licenses on forest exploitation, Benin natives supplied Benin City with water at a cost of £5,000, built a splendid Court-house, and improved the city generally.¹ The fate of the cotton industry, as already shown, was due to other factors,

1. Morel, Nigeria, op. cit. pp. 69-70

if not due to the policy Lever was now advocating. While the price of other tropical products which the Nigerian native was producing had been 'ascending' at the time, the price of cotton (that as paid to the native) was kept at the same low level under the system of monopoly then in vogue. The absence of competition, more than anything, was detrimental to the cotton industry because ^{although} the demand hitherto had exceeded the supply, and the price offered was insufficient to encourage further production. Moreover, the high freight rates paid to a monopolistic shipping system under Sir A.L. Jones, took a heavy toll from the cotton industry, not to mention the sad mismanagement of the BCGA's West African operations.¹

When Sir William Lever alleged that Morel had no commercial sense, his judgement was faulty. Like G.A. Moore of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Lever thought that the essence of commerce was a severe restriction of its affairs to pounds, shillings and pence. The human elements involved in this quest for more profits never seemed to have mattered to him. For him to imply or insinuate that Morel's criticism of his economic ideas stemmed from an ingrained antagonism to the commercial development of West Africa, "even from the

1. See Chap. VII

personal point of view of the business man",¹ was a curious absurdity. Morel's attitude to Lever's Congo concessions was based on several considerations; he was favourable to Lever, but feared the effect such an example might have in other parts of tropical Africa. In the Congo, the natural conditions of the natives had been so ruthlessly destroyed for a quarter of a century by the Leopoldian system that Morel saw the Lever enterprise which was about to start there in a different light from any such scheme which might be started in British West Africa where natural conditions still existed. So long as Lever was alive to direct it, Morel felt that his Congo enterprise might even be good for the Congo humanity, and compared with the conditions which had existed under Leopold, might even be "elysian".²

But more than anything, Morel was haunted by philosophical doubts. The principle of vast areas of land in uninhabited tropical Africa passing under the control of a European company was to him a 'bad' one; any active sanction of it might lead to the initiation of similar schemes run by men perhaps even worse than Lever himself. The people of the Congo had been so battered, broken and pulverized by misdirec-

1. Morel to Lever, 19 April 1911, copy F8/Lever EDMP.

2. Morel to Lever, 25 April 1911, copy F8/Lever EDMP.

ted capitalistic effort that Lever's advent amongst them, might never lead to anything worse. Nevertheless, the ultimate development of such a scheme, in which half the personnel was to be Belgian, when Lever was no longer there to direct it, must be a heart-searching issue for a man like Morel who had the interest of African natives at heart. Morel could not therefore but conclude that it would have been better, more just, profitable and practicable, had Lever started his scheme on entirely different lines.¹

William Lever was so convinced of the purity of his ideas that he jettisoned Morel's suggestions as either not practical or worse. He was ready to believe, as was true "of universal nature" that the African could "cultivate the soil and produce the products of the soil" when best he was interested in his labour. In fact, Lever conceded that the cultivation of groundnuts, the making of palm oil and the cracking of palm kernels by hand could only be done in the peasant way. It was, according to him, when one stepped out of this primitive field and tried to produce palm oil by machinery and express the oil from the groundnuts that he found that he had already travelled the full range of the

1. Morel to Lever, 19 April 1911, copy FS/Lever EDMP.

African's ability.¹ He justified his scheme with other economic arguments.

Lever had asked the Belgian and British Governments to see that factories were not erected within 20 miles of each other. His idea, as he explained, was that the native was free to supply whichever factory paid him the best prices for the fruit. He claimed that he was content with the geographical advantage each factory would enjoy under which the native would be at a disadvantage of portage to carry his fruit to the distant market. He pointed out that this theory had, in fact, prevailed practically throughout the very districts in Southern Nigeria which Morel had pointed out as prosperous, because the man who 'made' the palm oil near a certain market took his products to that market and sold it to the buyers for either John Holt and Company or the African Association, whoever was in the market. All other distant markets, Lever said, were out of competition. Moreover, those buyers in one market, neither having machinery (which might be rusting) nor large capital in perishable machinery, could afford to buy or not to buy as their orders from Europe required. Lever, therefore, pointed out that with this arrangement, competition would respond to the ordinary

1. Lever to Morel, 21 April 1911, copy F8/Lever EDMP.

commercial rule which prevailed in Liverpool or London.¹

One must agree with Lever, however, that once a real factory was put up in one area, the whole structure of trade came under an entirely different footing. A factory was like a baby that must be fed; the proprietor was at the mercy of the market. Because of uncertainties of raw materials factories had primarily been built only in European centres (like Marseilles, Hamburg and Liverpool) since these could draw supplies of kernels from as far north and south of the globe as they wished; which meant also that they paid world price for these products. Moreover, if the price of palm kernels in Africa was above the parity for coconuts in the Phillipines, Singapore or the South Sea Islands, the factory in Liverpool, Hamburg or Marseilles, could cease crushing palm kernels and could commence to crush copra; therefore, there would be no great variation in the oil equivalent. It would appear that the oil crusher in Europe was in a strong position under these circumstances. Lever, therefore, was of the opinion that it was quite impossible to put capital into mills for dealing with palm fruit in Africa and still enjoy this advantage if the proprietor did not get his fruit from at least 10 miles radius of the factory; if the factories

1. Lever to Morel, 21 April 1911, copy F8/Lever, EDMP.

were separated 20 miles from each other, each factory would have at least a zone of 10 miles round the factory; that distance whilst sufficient to ensure each mill its own supply at a fair price was not so great that natives could be in any way exploited. "They would still be sure of that reward which sweetens labour, the market price for their product". He regarded it as an "impossible" proposition that manufacturers should put up mills or factories on modern lines in Africa without ensuring a base of operations in the supply of their raw materials.¹

Yet it must be observed at the same time that Lever always emphasized his difficulties as if he was compelled to put up factories in Africa. If the other European manufacturer were so much at an advantage, that was the more reason why Lever should have "stayed put" in Europe and continued the business in the old way. He actually believed that coming to Africa would place him at an advantage. He could procure this advantage in two main ways. Possibly, he could have profitted by cutting out the European middleman and still paid slightly more for the fruit. It was more probable that he would have used the geographical disadvantage the native would suffer to pay him a smaller price for his labour. But

1. Lever to Morel, 21 April, 1911, copy F8/Lever, EDMP.

Lever might even have combined elements in the two methods: cut off the European competitors and yet paid the African less and then build up an economic empire. However, innocuous Lever's scheme looked on paper, Morel knew its implications; it would in practice lead to forcing natives one way or the other. For these "awful theories", Morel could only express a "thousand pities" that Lever was "surrounded by evil counsellors".¹ He never gave up this battle for Lever's conversion.

It should never be understood that Morel was really opposed to Lever. He had even involved himself so much in the Lever negotiations that some Gold Coast educated natives, then smarting under his support for the Forest Bill and his role in the West African Lands Committee, had accused him of receiving bribes from interested capitalist firms.² If money changed hands between Lever and Morel, as some evidence indicates, it appears that Morel did not really fulfil his own part of the quid pro quo, at least to the extent Lever would have wished. Lever even began to suspect that Morel had damaged some of his Nigerian projects. In spite of Lever's financial and political influence, Morel was always wary lest

1. Morel to Holt, 21 April 1911, 18/8, JHP.

2. Gold Coast Leader 6 Dec. 1913.

the great principle he was fighting for be weakened. He told Lever that if the native was free to sell or not to sell his fruit according to the attraction of a particular price offered him, his enterprise in tropical Africa would be mutually beneficial to him and the natives. But if pressure was brought to bear upon the native and he was looked upon merely-as a wage-earner who must be coerced if he refused to earn wages or be given lines of labour, then the enterprise was ruined. If, for example, the native of a given area in which Lever had acquired rights thought he could make more money by gathering rubber or other articles, or that he thought that the price offered for his palm fruit was insufficient, or at a given moment wished to attend to the sowing and harvesting of his food crops (a much more vital affair in the life of the native than most white-men imagined at this time); if under these hypothetical circumstances, the natives' objections and difficulties were swept aside by the method of coercion, Morel believed it would lead to an unsatisfactory end. He asserted:

".. My firm conviction is that, from the purely utilitarian standpoint, the Western world will get and is getting infinitely more out of the West African native by studying his methods of labour and by keeping him a free man rooted in his soil, rather than by trying to deal with him as with the Eastern races and passing the steam-roller of unimaginative sameness over his idiosyncracies. The immense vitality of the West African negro militates against his being a mere mechanical labourer, which is the characteristic of the Asiatic. But deal with him

tactfully and make him feel he is working for himself as well as for you, and there is no finer material in the world ...".¹

Morel was not only troubled lest Lever would ignore these maxims; he, as already indicated, also felt that the Congo arrangement had other dangers. The fact that Lever had become a large land owner in tropical Africa might stimulate other men who were trying to acquire the land and resources of West Africa - speculators and land monopolists in Britain, who would exploit the native and make waste of his country "in order to acquire temporary riches at the expense of the public interest". But Morel was always worried with the acute question of the nature of the ultimate society that would evolve: "What would be the position of the native, half a century hence, in the area in which Lever's Company had become, not the lessee, but the owner, in view of the inevitable increase of population there?"²

These well-reasoned and humane arguments, did not convince William Lever. He still entertained the ingrained belief that the Negro had not the requisite "organising" ability to use his land. The negro could take in hand only a patch of land and cultivate it, he alleged; "but if you

1. Morel to Lever, 25 April 1911, F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Ibid.

take the millions of square miles of land in West Africa under the control of European nations, you will see that under a policy of restricting the land entirely to the Native it is practically leaving Africa an undeveloped country for centuries". He claimed that "these regions of Africa require something more than freedom of the Natives to make his contracts and engagements", "if they are to be opened up and made useful either to the present generation or to immediately succeeding generations". Moreover "it is only by utilization of the land that the agreement can be made profitable to Lever Brothers".¹

Not only did Lever claim a right to the soil and justified the claim by economic necessity and urgency, he even also went so far as to prove that his economic method was in fact quite suitable to the nature of the negro: that a depericarping machine or mill for treatment of the fruit from the palm trees would exactly suit African native characteristics. His view of the situation was that the native would be able to gather the fruit in his way and bring it to the mill at his own time within reasonable limits and points. Thus, Lever claimed, the native might work very hard for a week or a day and do nothing for the next week or next

1. Lever to Morel, 27 April 1911, F8/Lever, EDMP.

day and still make plenty of money to keep himself. The machinery would do the methodical work which, he alleged, the African native found irksome. The new mechanized industry was also very congenial to native habits, and, of course, according to Lever, the policy of plantations would be congenial to the native. These absurdities apart, Lever was never concerned with the position of the African native half a century after his country would have passed to foreign private corporations; Lever never found it possible "to put a dead man's hand on the future".¹

Although John Holt had hoped that Lever's Congo scheme might, with safeguards, prove beneficial to African natives,² he supported Morel's efforts to convert Lever when it had become clear that Lever was obdurate and had refused to see the path of humane policy.³ Holt wrote at length to Morel in a manner which lifts other corners ~~of~~^{of} the veil:

"I am glad to see your views so well expressed on this subject, and the warning you have given Lever, as what may be the result of his experiment in the Congo. There is great danger in that direction, and there is great danger elsewhere, if men seek to obtain a monopoly of anything - It appears to me that you are thinking how to protect and improve the native, whilst Lever is thinking how he can make the native a mere economical

1. Lever to Morel, 27 April 1911, F8/Lever, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 6 Sept. 1910, F8/4, EDMP.

3. Holt to Morel, 17 March 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

producer of grease by means of economical inventions, to be introduced from Europe, the object of which is primarily to obtain grease at a lower price for consumption in Europe, than it can be got by the present primitive methods of obtaining grease (by the natives). My own feeling is that Lever is going too fast in that direction; he would be doing greater good to the native, if he would instruct him first of all, by simple machinery, to be invented for the purpose, how to produce a larger amount of grease products, by hand labour, than he has hitherto been able to produce without such mechanical help. I doubt, however, if Lever is likely to make his main object that of helping or improving the native. He wants to obtain grease by utilising grease products on the spot, where grown naturally, by means of European machinery, and the organisation of labour on European lines ...".¹

However he might have admired Lever's foresight, ingenuity and originality,² Holt was always puzzled as to why Lever only wanted to get grease products in Africa cheaper than he could buy them in Europe; Lever could as well have gone a step further and produced soap in Africa, instead of at Port Sunlight! "Why did he not build up an industry, complete in every respect, and not confine it to one department of his industry?" Holt asked. He concluded that "there is great danger in it".³ "I do not know if I care for his ideas in British Colonies", Holt told Morel.⁴

1. Holt to Morel, 26 April 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 17 Nov. 1912, F8/4, EDMP.
Holt to Morel, 15 Jan. 1913, F8/4, EDMP.

3. Holt to Morel, 26 April 1911, F8/4, EDMP.

4. Holt to Morel, 15 Jan. 1913, F8/4, EDMP.

Opposition to Lever's economic methods was already reflected in the activities of his economic opponents. After Brunner Mond and Company had bought up two other oil concerns, the two greatest rival firms of soap manufacturers in Britain at the time were Lever Brothers under Sir William Hesketh Lever and Brunner Mond and Co. under Sir John Brunner.¹ Lever had acquired enormous concession in the Congo; he had also tried to acquire similar concessions in British West Africa where his efforts were blocked, but his company had succeeded in getting out of Harcourt a promise of a grant of mills privileges and monopoly of transport ^{within} a specified area. Fearing to be swamped, Brunner Mond floated a syndicate² and proceeded to obtain 99 years' leases of oil-palm bearing

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1. Brunner, Hon. Sir John Tomlison, 1st Bt. created 1895. D.L; M.P. (Liberal) Northwich 1885-86; and 1887-1909. PC. 1906; LL.D. (Hon.) and Pro-Chancellor Liverpool University, 1909; Chairman of Brunner Mond and Co. Ltd., alkali manufacturers. Born at Everton, Liverpool, 8 Feb. 1842; Son of Rev. John Brunner of Canton Zurich, Switzerland, Schoolmaster at Everton; married 1st 1864 Salome (d. 1874) daughter of James Davies of Liverpool; 2nd 1875 Jane (d. 1910). Educated in his father's school. Entered merchantile life at Liverpool in 1857; Served John Hutchinson and Co., alkali manufacturers of Widnes, 1861-72; in company with Ludwig Mond, F.R.S., he established in 1873 the Alkali works at Northwich, which was one of the largest in the world.
 2. This syndicate which operated their Gold Coast Concessions was known as the "Apol".

lands from the native chiefs in various places in the Gold Coast, the whole area affected being about 300 to 400 square miles.¹

When the facts concerning these concessions came up in evidence before the West African Lands Committee, Morel was so upset about them that he at once protested most vehemently to the Chairman, Digby, and endeavoured to influence him to see Harcourt, saying that it was "a monstrous thing" that while the Committee was discussing these questions a thing of that sort should take place, and since according to him, it was "absolutely contrary" to the policy which had brought the Committee into being. It appears that Digby was unable to do what Morel advised, since, as he said, he was not entitled to interfere in matters of administration. Morel alleged also that Digby was backed up in his refusal by W.D. Ellis, a member of the Committee who was also in charge of the Gold Coast Department at the Colonial Office; and that Ellis knew all about this Apol business and had given it his personal blessing.²

1. J.H. Batty to C.O. 25 July 1912, CO 96/525.

2. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy, F8/Cadbury EDMP.

Acting on this somewhat erroneous impression¹ and having failed with Digby, Morel obtained through Wedgewood (another member of the Committee) details of these leases which confirmed the evidence which had inadvertently slipped out from Giles Hunt in the course of cross-examination. Morel then went to see Strachey and demanded one of these three things: either Strachey must take up the matter at once with Harcourt, or Morel must see Harcourt himself, or he would denounce the whole thing in the Times and then resign from the Committee.² Strachey was as incensed as Morel. He

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1. Minutes by Ellis on Giles Hunt to C.O. 2 Nov. 1912, CO 96/526 would indicate that Morel's impression that Ellis had given Brunner Mond his blessing was unfounded. Brunner Mond and Co. had amended the agreement of their Concessions to bring them within the Concessions Ordinance of 1900, Ellis found the agreement "self-contradictory" and added: "The concession is rather a nullity, or an attempt to cheat the devil behind his back: and no self-respecting Court would validate it ..".
 2. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy, F8/Cadbury.

wrote a strong minute¹ which was endorsed by Sir John Anderson² and Alfred Emmott³ and sent up to Harcourt. The

1. On 31 July 1912, Strachey minuted "... An inspection of the terms of this Concession completely justifies Mr. Belfield's views as expressed in his report and his letters. Without anticipating the recommendations of the Committee, I feel quite certain that this sort of concession is precisely one of the abuses which they desire to abolish. It is not for mining or for planting, but practically for absolute rights over the natural produce of the land for 99 years. - The concessionaires may remove villages if they like, or even sell the land - the inhabitants become tenants at will. ... I and some of the other members of the Committee feel very strongly that it will put us into a very foolish position to allow concessions of this sort to proceed, especially as we have been told by Mr. Hunt (the Solicitor who drew up these concessions) that they do not wait for "validation" of the Concessions to begin working on the assumption that they will be validated ...".
Minute on J.H. Batty to C.O., 25 July 1912, CO 96/525.
2. According to Anderson, "This concession goes much further than the Gazette notice, and is practically a grant of the land and everything now growing or that may be grown on it. It is certainly open to grave objection, but as the law stands, the only thing that we can do to prevent its being validated is to amend the law, so as to forbid the granting of such rights, i.e. the right to collect produce to the exclusion of the natives of the district, and to remove the natives from the district ...".
Minute of 1 Aug. 1912 (ibid).
3. Emmott minuted: "I entirely agree. We must take every step - and immediately - to prevent such a concession as this being validated.
Minute of 1 Aug. 1912 (ibid).

Secretary of State thereupon cabled out to the Gold Coast that all these and similar concessions must be held up until the Committee had given its recommendations, and that, if necessary, special legislation must be passed at once to prevent this grant.¹

When Giles Hunt knew that it was Morel who had damaged the Apol concessions, he went up to him, bringing along the draft Ordinance about the Lever Concessions in the Gold Coast Gazette, to prove that Lever's scheme would jeopardise the interests of other commercial firms. At the same time Sir John Brunner complained of Morel's partiality and then visited Morel to find out why he favoured one group and antagonised another firm engaged in an almost similar business.² Morel was always of the opinion that Lever's privileges were not concessions. However he complained to the Colonial Office and induced it to revoke the monopoly of mechanical traction promised to Lever because it was

1. C.O. to OAG. Gold Coast, 3 Aug. 1912 (Tel.) CO 96/525
C.O. to OAG. Gold Coast, 10 Aug. 1912, CO 96/525.

2. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy, F8/Cadbury.

detrimental to native interest.¹ But Brunner Mond and Company, he alleged took the undesirable line of endeavouring to procure concessions through the usual method of deceiving the Concessions Court, acting through the instrumentality of "the cleverest man on the Gold Coast",² Giles Hunt. Since Morel believed that Lever's monopoly of mechanical traction was dangerous to native economic independence, he had protested to the Colonial Office; and having also seen that the whole operation of the Apol was not only dangerous to the native survival but also subversive of the very intentions of the Lands Committee, he had protested to the Colonial Office which had forced them to modify their concessions. But Morel was rather too severe with the Apol; Lever's whole scheme was not really less dangerous than Brunner's. It might be that Morel still cherished his old antagonism towards Edward Brunner, who in 1906 was involved in the Sierra Leone concessions, and who was probably related to the present

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1. E.D. Morel to Harcourt, 18 Sept. 1912, CO 96/526.
 Harcourt to Morel, 27 Sept. 1912, *ibid*.
 Morel to Harcourt, 6 Oct. 1912, *ibid*.
 On 22 Oct. 1912, Harcourt minuted "... I am keeping an open mind as to any future grant of exclusive transport rights" (*ibid*)
 On 17 Dec. 1912, the C.O. decided to 'withdraw' Lever's 'monopoly' of transport because 'it would be contrary to public policy'. C.O. to Lever Bros, 17 Dec. 1912, CO 96/526
 2. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy F8/Cadbury.

Brunner, but even at that time, Morel had been accused of not necessarily writing from "higher motive", but "to aim at somebody",¹

Since Holt had defended Morel against the charge of prejudice and regarded Edward Brunner (who might be related to Sir John Brunner) as "an unknown individual",² Morel's attitude towards Sir John Brunner's enterprise seemed to have been influenced by two main considerations. Sir John Brunner, according to Morel, was "a fine man" possessing "a lot of influence with the Government". Moreover, as the President of the National Liberal Federation who had also thrown his influence consistently into the lines of an Anglo-German rapprochement, Morel felt that it was of enormous importance that such a man should be won over to the right policy; he should be made to see the economical advantage as well as the justice involved in a policy and "principle which Liberals must uphold". Apart from this personal merit of winning Brunner to the cause of reform, Morel saw that since official policy itself was in danger of capitalist subversion, it was necessary to block this commercial

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1. In a letter of 15 Nov. 1906 Holt told Morel that a certain Deuss (a man of Liberal views) had made these allegations against him.
 2. Ibid: It is, however, possible that Edward Brunner was related to Sir John Brunner, as Holt suggested.

adventurism in order to preserve the economic independence of the African native.¹

Although Brunner's West African operations did not wholly escape public scrutiny, it was Sir William Lever's negotiations that really caused a political stir in Britain. When interested sections of the public came to know about these transactions, they made spirited protests to the Colonial Office. The Chambers of Commerce, as usual, proclaimed humanitarian motives when actually they were fighting their own economic war against a powerful opponent. Other firms who were likely to be affected by the imminent Palm Oil Ordinance protested most vehemently against the monopoly promised to Lever.² Although most of these merchants affected were reluctant to accuse the Colonial Office with corruption in favouring Lever, their protests smelt of this charge. There were, however, one or two who openly accused the Colonial Office of hypocrisy and corruption. In January 1913, G.H. Powell, who lived in Lincoln, asked the Colonial Office why it gave "a radical firm" like Lever Brothers large areas without rent or tribute tax. He told the Colonial Office: "You have, by your extraordinary protectionist policy on

1. Morel to Cadbury, 14 Oct. 1912, copy F8/Cadbury.

2. For the protests from the Chambers of Commerce, Simpson, North, Harley and Co., etc. See Cd. 6561.

behalf of Lever Brothers 'enslaved' all the poor niggers who .. live in the palm tree region of Sierra Leone .. and also prevented competition in buying palm oil and nuts .. in that region. Your professed free traders bawl out your belief in free competition in trade, but before God you are hypocrites."¹ Although the officials minuted that "this effusion" should be "put by",² others had even made bolder charges. A few days before this, a certain merchant interested in palm produce on the Gold Coast, D.D. Dickinson, have gone up to the Colonial Office and angrily told Ellis that the Lever affair was squalid. According to Ellis, Dickinson's anger was invincible:

"He complained that we favoured the rich - and said it was the Marconi business over again. I said that if he had a charge of corruption to bring against H.M. Ministers the place to bring it was in Parliament; or at any rate not in their offices. Finally he withdrew the charge of corruption. But I daresay he will make it again ...".³

As Ellis indicated, the ideal venue for criticism was Parliament. For several weeks the Tory Party had conducted a campaign of innuendo and insinuation by daily

1. G.H. Powell to C.O. 7 Jan. 1913, CO 267/555.

2. Minutes by Sir H. Just, 8 Jan. 1913, W.D. Ellis, 10 Jan. 1913, (ibid.).

3. Minute of 8 April 1913 by W.D. Ellis, on D.D. Dickinson to C.O. 30 Dec. 1912 and an interview of 8 April 1913, CO, 96/526.

questions in the Commons, accompanied by offensive and often disorderly interjections. On 13 November 1912, Alfred Lyttleton led the Tories in probing the spirit and letter of the Palm Oil Bill then presented to the Gold Coast Legislative Council and which had been opposed by some ^{un}official and native members.¹ Harcourt's explanation that the Ordinance was "permissive in character", and "general in scope"² left members of Parliament ^{un}convinced. As Austen Chamberlain was requesting that the relevant papers should be laid before the House, W. Moore, told the Commons that Lever's application was specially granted to him "in return for services" he rendered "to the Radical Party".³ Harcourt's explanation that he had asked a deputation from the three main Chambers of Commerce whether they felt Lever was favoured "on account of political considerations" and that they had "at once disavowed any suspicion on that ground",⁴ in fact implied that Harcourt was already worried about this parliamentary reaction before it came. Members continued to harass Harcourt, criticising the draft Ordinance and the White Paper on ^{the} Lever

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1. HC. 5s. Vol. XLIII, 1912, 1967.
See G.E. Metcalfe, Great Britain and Ghana, op. cit. pp. 540-4.
 2. HC. 5s. Vol XLIII, 1912, 1967.
 3. HC. 5s. Vol. XLIII, 1912, 1969.
 4. Ibid.

privileges just published¹ which did not allay the fears of members. When on 5 Dec. of the same year W. Moore wanted to know whether Sir William Lever had been "placed in possession of his new territory", Colonel Seeley was amazed at the insinuation.² Led by G.A. Touche, members of the Tory Party dropped hints of corrupt motives, while allegations were made that agreements had been entered into with local chiefs in Southern Nigeria obviating the necessity for legislative action for Lever there.³

Harcourt was definitely worried by these attacks,⁴ coming, as they did, at a time when the British public was already aware of such a ministerial impropriety as the

1. Cd. 6561, op. cit.

2. HC. Debs. 5s. Vol. XLIV, 1912, 2465.

3. HC Debs. 5s. Vol. XLX, 1912, 1500-1.
 HC Debs. 5s. Vol. LII, 1913, 978, 979-80; 519-21.
 HC Debs. 5s. Vol. LV, 1913, 213-14.
 Vide also CO 267/555; CO 554/10.
The Daily Citizen, 21 Nov. 1912, 2 Dec. 1912, took Wedgewood to task for his support for the Lever Concessions.
Touche, (Sir) George Alexander, 1st Bt. 1920; Kt. 1917;
 Born at Edinburgh 24 May 1861, son of Anthony Murray Touche, banker. Educ. at Edinburgh Institution and Univ. Head of firms of George A. Touche & Co., London and Birmingham, and Montreal and Toronto, and Touche, Niven & Co., N.Y., Chicago etc. Conservative M.P. for North Islington, 1910-18. Died 7 July 1935. A City man.

4. Vide African Mail, 21 Feb. 1913.

Marconi scandals. The surprising thing, however, was that Morel openly supported Harcourt and Lever during this crisis. In an editorial in the African Mail, Morel hoped that "the attacks upon the Colonial Office in this country and in West Africa will cease"; he justified Lever's experiment in West Africa and Harcourt's support for it:

"What the economic results of Lever Brothers' bold experiment may be, time alone can show. But this experiment will now be conducted in British West Africa, under conditions which inflict no hardship upon anyone, and which do not conflict with the policy of maintaining both the rights of the natives in their soil and the open door for trade, which Mr. Harcourt and his predecessor have consistently pursued".¹

In February 1913, he wrote against those who had generated the "odious warfare for the past three months against" Harcourt and Lever,² and cleared Harcourt of corruption in a letter to Holt:

".. I see there is going to be a regular Tory attack on Mr. Harcourt on what is erroneously termed the "Lever Concessions". They are making a great mistake, because as I happen to know, Harcourt has played an absolutely straight game in this matter all through ..".³

Although Morel had privately preached to Lever the necessity of his discharging ^{his} imperial duty to his West African wards, and had also induced the Colonial Office to cancel the railway

1. A.M., (Editorial) 17 Jan. 1913.

2. A.M., (Editorial) 28 Feb. 1913.

3. Morel to Holt, 2 Jan. 1913, 18/13, JHP.

monopoly promised to Lever, yet publicly, he wholly supported Lever. This was an occasion in which Morel's desire for political support nearly undermined his public advocacy.

Apart from Holt, who regarded Lever's experiment as dangerous to native welfare, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society had discussed the implications of his Congo concessions. On 7 June 1912, John Harris reported to the Society Committee that himself and J.G. Alexander had interviewed William Lever on the 15 May of that year, impressing upon him the importance of safeguarding native rights. The Committee had regretted that the Congo concessions were granted to Lever since they believed that native rights had been compromised in principle and that the affair held a possibility for international friction in the future.¹ The Society had tried to induce Lever to cooperate with it in its suggested ways of reforming abuses which might occur; but Lever had replied "in an unsatisfactory sense". He not merely declined to cooperate with the Society but even told that organisation that "its policy was calculated seriously to injure the Congo native".² The Society took great exception to Lever's attitude, and it is not unlikely that

1. Minutes, Committee, AS APS, 7 June 1912, item 2170; E2/13, Vol. VIII.

2. Minutes, Committee, AS APS, 5 July 1912, item 2183; (ibid).

it cooperated with the Tory Party in criticising his West African "privileges".

In January 1913, John Harris in his criticism had told Harcourt that the term 'concession' or "privileges" was inaccurate in describing Lever's 'favour' in West Africa, particularly in the Gold Coast. He suggested that a "purchasing monopoly" was more accurate.¹ This letter produced a divergence of opinions in the Colonial Office about the exact definition of Lever's 'concessions'. Sir H. Just regarded this communication as "a very silly letter" and claimed that "Levers haven't got a monopoly of anything at all ...".² Sir John Anderson minuted that "no monopoly of purchasing has been granted."³ Lord Emmott was of the opinion that "the letter is well-meant, but foolish". He added, "Let Mr. Harris down gently; but of all misleading titles what could sound worse than a 'purchasing monopoly'".⁴ Although Harcourt shared this view too, it would seem that Ellis who had opposed Lever's applications gave the most accurate definition when he minuted, "... all that is now proposed

1. John Harris to Harcourt, 1 Jan. 1913, CO 554/15.

2. Minute of 4 Jan. 1913 on *ibid.*

3. Minute of 4 Jan. 1913 *ibid.*

4. Minute of 6 Jan. 1913 *ibid.*

to be granted is a manufacturing monopoly over a limited area.¹ Whatever is the exact interpretation of these grants given to Lever, one feels that political pressure within the Liberal party, and not corrupt intent, probably influenced them. But the urgency of protecting an Imperial industry (not less important than the cotton movement), as Lever and Morel had argued, might have added some weight in influencing policy.

In the event, however, it became known that Lever Brothers, like the BCGA, were not determined to honour their pledges with the Colonial Office. Not only had they started hedging on their former promise to invest a prescribed sum of money in West Africa so as to merit their special privileges,² but they had also deceived that Office into believing that they had perfected the machinery which would transform

1. Minute of 4 Jan. 1913 *ibid*.

2. When it became clear that Lever Bros. were not ready to spend as much money as they had promised the C.O. in S.I. i.e. £15,000 during the first year, Harcourt minuted: "If Messrs Lever are not prepared to stick to their terms they must drop the whole agreement. I will not budge in the matter". Minute of 17 Jan. 1913, on Simpson, North, Harley & Co. to C.O. Jan 1913, CO 267/555.

the palm-oil industry for the British Empire.¹ The machine was not even manufactured, and Lever Brothers, although they had received their "manufacturing monopolies",² were unwilling to spend the large sums they had agreed to. When these revelations were made known to Harcourt during the heat of the Tory tirades, he was struck with immense mortification: "I see no reason why I should be 'pinched' by the Concessionaires, whilst I am being accused of

1. Emmott found that Lever's competitors have revealed the true position. "Sir W. Lever led Mr. Harcourt and me", he minuted, "to suppose that he had perfected machinery enabling him to go ahead at once. From what I have since heard I am in doubt whether anyone has yet invented a perfect machine for expressing oil from the pericarp. This letter adds to my doubt ...".
Minute of 17 Jan. 1913 (ibid).
2. See (a) License by Sir Edward Marsh Merewater Governor, to Lever Brothers Limited, under the provision of the Palm Oil Ordinance (No. 7 of 1913) within the area in the Yonni District of Sierra Leone Protectorate, dated 29 Oct. 1913
(b) Grant of Easement over in the Yonni District of Sierra Leone by H.E. Sir E.M. Merewater, Gov. of S.L. to Lever Bros. Ltd., Dated 29 Oct. 1913.
(c) Lease of lands in the Yonni District of the S.L. Protectorate by Chief Bai Sherbro and others acting as tribal authority of the Yonni Chiefdom in the protectorate of S.L.; Dated 29 Oct. 1913.
(d) Agreement varying Grant of Easement in the Yonni District of S.L. Protectorate. H.E. Sir Edward Marsh Merewater K.C.V.O., C.M.G. to Messrs. Lever Brothers Ltd. Dated 29 Oct. 1913.
See CO 267/555.
In the Gold Coast, the Oil Palm Ordinance was passed in July 1913 as Ordinance No. 10 of 1913. Vide G.E. Metcalfe, Great Britain and Ghana. op. cit. pp. 542-4 for later proceedings in the Gold Coast Legco.

corruption by the Tory Party! When I die my heart will be found to be enveloped in a pericarp!!"¹ It was an unfortunate affair brought about mainly by personal influence and party allegiance.

1. Minute of 6 Feb. 1913, by Harcourt on Simpson, North, Harly & Co. to C.O. 27 Jan. 1913, CO 267/555.

CHAPTER VII
IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

One of the arguments advanced by the Mary Kingsley school against the Crown Colony system was that it inevitably produced an extravagant financial administration.¹ This school alleged that waste in expenditure, to a great extent, was due to monopolistic practices and inefficient administration inherent in the system which always tended to operate against both imperial and colonial interests. They argued that the West African Colonies were financially capable of maintaining their governments and all necessary 'developments'. Unfortunately, they claimed, this was not effective under Crown Colony rule; mismanagement impoverished the West African Colonies already suffering from the effects of various monopolies. This impoverishment meant that Colonial rule attempted three expedients: introduction of direct taxation which the natives resisted;² increased duties against the wishes of the merchant

1. See Chapter II of this thesis for Mary Kingsley's case against the Crown Colony system, in particular the exposition of her believed Government by commercial men which she believed would reduce administrative costs while providing a much better type of rule for tropical peoples.

Also Mary Kingsley, Studies, op.cit.

2. See Appendix.

community; and more imperial loans which it was alleged were against the interest of the British tax-payer. Criticism was not, however, confined to the Crown Colony system, for the new energy which Chamberlain brought to the Colonial Office had meant more expenditure in imperial and colonial spheres. Almost every item of colonial administration was seen as wasteful, starting from the cost of harbour works in the Gold Coast,¹ to the introduction of coinage to West Africa.² Some of these attitudes were, in fact, hardened but naive, rear-guard action against forces of change. But their questioning of the time-honoured institution of Crown Agents, their suspicion of the selfish interest behind the then current craze for railway construction, and their open criticism of the West African Shipping monopoly, show that they were at times forward-looking.

- 1 . Mary Kingsley to Holt; 21 June 1898, 16/2, JHP.
Chagrined by reports she had received about harbour works on the Gold Coast, Kingsley cynically remarked in this letter: "I should not be surprised if there were some idea in the official mind to construct docks etc. and ships on the Gold Coast at the cost of thousands more than it could be done, either in Sierra Leone or Lagos even ---".
It seems that it was the high cost of construction that she was against and not merely "the building of harbours" as Dr. Flint says in his Reassessment, op.cit. p.104
- 2 . The introduction of coinage to West Africa is a fascinating theme which, however, is tangential to this thesis, For a good account, See A.G. Hopkins, The Economic History of Lagos, 1870-1914 (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, 1963).

Thus the argument that they were merely trying to 'fossilize' the 'rudimentary' conditions of the informal empire¹ shows only one side of the story. There can be no doubt that they were disheartened by the huge economic involvement of sufficiently integrating the informal colonial structure into a new scheme for either global political strategy or expansive consolidation and 'development'². But the third Party argued that if the New Imperialism was to achieve a constructive function, it was imperative that eagerness to raise revenue and advance loans should be matched by a willingness and ability to administer this colonial development on sound financial basis. In other words, the most constructive Imperialism was that which sought to fuse into that popular movement for imperial greatness, a sober, shrewd and honest application of Gladstonian efficiency. The Third Party were constructive Imperialists who, though they deplored the economic necessities of the new order, were also kicking against the sanctity of old-world systems of patronage which they felt were perverting the

1. Flint, Re-assessment, op.cit.

2. See Chapter I; Introduction.

true imperial ideals.

The ardour of denunciation which had characterized Mary Kingsley's attitude towards the Colonial Office also characterized her followers. Although Morel gave it a new application (for while he denounced some actions he always did so amidst a general tenor of adulation for the Colonial Office) there can be no doubt of their dissatisfaction with the financial administration of the Colonies. Kingsley's charge of incompetence and selfishness against the Colonial Officials (at home and abroad) was taken up by Holt, who believed that Africa could finance her developments if she had "not greedy, unscrupulous, spend-thrift administrations to bleed her", for "it is the greed of this ruling class which will not find enough revenue out of Africa for their unlimited wants, and turns to fools or knaves in this country to help them to bleed the home tax-payer as well - -".¹ Mary Kingsley had concentrated her criticism on the system of administration itself; John Holt now saw that it was mainly the arrival of Chamberlain which had worsened things.

Therefore, although he saw monopolies as agents of extravagance, Holt was particularly worried about the implications of Chamberlain's "development" of West Africa.

1. Holt to Morel, 3 Feb 1900, F 8/1, EDMP.

Towards the end of 1900, he complained to Morel that the "Estate Development business of Mr. Chamberlain is bringing debt to Colonies which have hitherto had revenue to invest. From being prudent thrifty children of the Empire they are to become wasteful spendthrifts whose end is beggary - crushing taxation, heavy debt, and impoverished hard-up administration through accumulated creations of lucrative sinecures, which nobody will abolish, lest their income should be reduced or their office follow suit¹ - -". He regarded Chamberlain's policy as "nothing less than moonlight madness."² He saw the colonial administrations under Chamberlain's charge as existing for no other thing "apart from taxation and punitive expeditions," without any attempt by these administrations "to spend the increased revenue for any worthy public purpose", except syphoning the colonial resources into the pockets of one or two monopolists.³ He alleged that most of the West African Colonies had been saddled with debts out of proportion to the improvements made there; and regarded it as "disgraceful" that any British Colony should be in debt. He ascribed this state of affairs also to the haste and energy of Chamberlain and his aides:

1. Holt to Morel, 21 Nov. 1900, F 8/1, EDMP.

2. Holt to Morel, 8 Nov. 1902. F 8/2, EDMP.

3. Holt to Morel, 2 Jan. 1901. F 8/1, EDMP.

"Some people are not happy unless they are in debt and the more they are the greater progress they see - but it is a load put on the backs of those who have to follow. They too will have their problems to solve and this huge expenditure of capitalists will be an obstacle to their enterprise. It is the action of a spendthrift generation seeking to obtain praise for their energy and Imperialism. Whilst lavish expenditure goes merrily on apparent but illusive success as shown by manipulated figures delude the bewildered spectators, but pay-day must come and curses loud and deep will be heaped on the heads of those outrageous proceedings on a helpless Colony, by a band of 'patriots', 'egotists', 'reckless swaggering buccaneers' - - "1

Holt made this point, particularly with reference to

Chamberlain, in another letter to Morel:

"Until J.C. came with his development of our estates ideas, it was the pride of our West African Colonies to work their administrative machinery on modest lines with a small tariff, and have a balance to their credit; but now under the present regime they are being run on extravagant lines, such as the Prodigal Son would have employed and the end must mean either bank ²(empty) or a load of debt which will absorb the population to pay the interests therein. It seems to parade an artificial appearance of progress, but it is imprudent, and will earn the malediction of future generations who will have to hear the burden. We are or pretend to be shocked by the borrowing of self-governing Colonies but I think all we say about them can be more truthfully applied to our Crown Colonies - where is there another Colony which can equal the debt of Sierra Leone in proportion to its exports? - - "3

He always had in mind the teachings of Mary Kingsley who never ceased preaching that mal-administration of the West African Colonies would inevitably find them in a

1. Holt to Morel, 8 Nov. 1902. F8/2, EDMP.

2. 'to bank' is a North country expression meaning 'to be broke'; He 'banked' means 'he went bankrupt'.

3. Holt to Morel, 23 Nov. 1902., F8/2, EDMP,

similar impecunious plight to the West Indies. And when he saw that the Colonies were becoming incapable of financing the 'development' programmes which Chamberlain had drawn up for them, Holt found the inevitable almost at hand:

"What Miss Kingsley told us would happen is coming and very shortly. The home government will have to dole out pittance to carry on government and the picture of another British Colony ruined by rampant extravagant and waste will be presented to a bewildered public".¹

According to him, things might have been different "if the business had been gone about in a practical careful thrifty way, but then the show would have been missing. There would have been reality in place of illusion and the stage effect; the flags and drums would have not been there to deceive us or make us feel so momentarily proud and happy. It is a fantastic and sham world we live in".² Holt's conclusion was that "nothing but economy of the administration instead of wilful waste and reckless expenditure can prevent these West African settlements from becoming a disgrace to our intelligence and competency for governing alien races - -".³

This plea for a more economical administration was persisted in by Morel and Holt long after Kingsley had blazed the trail with her abortive scheme for government

1. Holt to Morel, 8 Nov.1902, F8/2, EDMP.

2. Ibid, . . .

3. Holt to Morel, 16 April 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

by traders. In 1903, for example, when Hazzledine, Lugard's Secretary, publicly demanded more imperial grants for Northern Nigeria, he was at once rebuked by Morel, who told him that the true imperialism favoured "less expensive desiderata"; that military campaigns and political absorption which carried more apparent success were not the ideal policy.¹ Holt and Morel always compared French and British colonial administrations, and came to the conclusion that the French were better administrators, particularly with reference to native interests.² Holt found the salaries of British West African Governors too high in comparison with their German counterparts;³

1 . West African Mail, 10 April 1903.

2 . Holt to Morel, 19 Oct.1903, F8/2, EDMP.

3 . Holt to Morel, 27 Feb.1910. F8/4, EDMP.
Holt rejoiced at the report in the Morning Post that the salary of the German Governor of Kia Chow had been reduced from £2500 to £2000 p.a. by the Budget Committee of the Reichstag, and commended the Germans as 'a practical people'. He shrewdly observed: "the governor need not indulge in luxurious living - In respect of salaries, Germans cannot hope to compete with England - No; nor need she wish to. Upon that principle will in the long run depend whether a country is to become great or small, prosperous or decadent. That is the difference between wealth and poverty. The nation that can restrain its politicians from wasting public money on emoluments in favour of those who run its affairs must lead among the nations of the earth. It implies mental power to restrain one's natural impulses. It means simplicity of living, work and practical results. Can you imagine any power we possess in this country being used to stop the increase of salaries, or expenditure of any kind, much less to reduce it? Who have we in the House of Commons with the power to stop the ever increasing expenditure over luxuries of every kind in our Crown Colonies for the indulgence of men who live a drowsy, careless, sport and pleasure-loving life for the most part and who in one form or another are continually adding to the burdens of the country for their benefit.

and in any case, they were not justified by hard work.¹

§ continued from previous page.

I was asking an official the other day to tell me why he got duty pay; what it was for, why it was put on. He could not tell me. He said he supposed it was an indirect way of increasing the salaries of the people who receive it. It seems to me that we have the rot amongst our people in finance and the end will prove disastrous to our country unless we imitate our German cousins, who set us such a fine example - - - -"

It must be noted that the scheme of salaries which Governor Egerton recommended in 1906 and which Elgin approved was attacked by several people as excessively high. For example, the Lagos Standard of 13 June 1906 denounced it as fantastic. A public meeting in Lagos on 6 June of the same year demonstrated against the salary increase. (See CO 520/36, Egerton to Elgin, 11 Aug. 1906, end 2) In the Legislative Council meeting of 25 May 1906, Sapara Williams and Dr. Obadiah Johnson urged the necessity of economy everywhere. (CO 591/3, S. Nig. Govt. Gazettee, 13 June 1906.

In reorganising salaries, Egerton copied the Gold Coast 'custom' of attaching 'duty pay' to all posts carrying initial salaries of £400 or more pa. This duty allowance (about 20% of the salary attached to an office) which an officer drew while in West Africa, became an acting allowance when the substantive officer was on leave of absence." This in fact meant an increase in 'active salary'. On 31 Jan. 1908, The African Mail attacked these salary increases. But the C.O. also watched these increases, always examining the merits of each case. (CO. 520/63, Minute by J. Anderson on Egerton to Crew 11 July 1908). When Mr. Smith, the Governor of S.L. proposed a general rise in salaries for that colony and protectorate, the C-O opposed the measure. As A. Fiddian minuted, "the financial position of Sierra Leone" was "Too precarious to justify us in embarking on a general revision of salaries." L. Probyn to C-O. 27 Sept. 1910; minutes by A. Fiddian 5. Oct. 1910; W.D. Ellis, 5 Oct. 1910. CO 267/520

1. Holt to Morel, 14 Aug. 1905, FS/2, EDMP.
Holt furiously alleged that the West African officials worked only 6 hours per diem and then took 6 months holiday at the end of each year, in addition to looking up to a pension: "They are a contemptible lot of lazy parasites for whom I have no respect. Other people have to work

1 continued on next page.....

They condemned the spread of luxurious living in the Colonies, particularly in Western Nigeria,¹ and in the Gambia. For example, when in 1909, it was reported that it had cost £3,658 to refit the yacht of the Governor of the Gambia, Holt flared up:

"Just imagine that Governor's yacht costing £3,658 to refit. Don't you think that this sum would have bought a new yacht (if such a thing be necessary at all which I think not) big enough and good for any reasonable trustee of such a colony as the Gambia or any other of our West African Colonies? It is shameful luxury and waste - -"²

The general criticisms might have been regarded as the rantings of people who were ignorant of the true nature of British involvements in West Africa. For surely, Holt's reference to the Colonies as 'settlements' indicates that he was probably still thinking in terms of the pre-Imperial situation when 'government' was scattered along the coast; when the merchants bartered their commodities in the traditional way, and when the burden of indirect taxation was not as onerous as now that the 'informal empire' had

1 continued from previous page.

all the harder and live on less because of their laziness and extravagance. Why must we be public servants in order to indulge in such ease? What kind of a system is it that we have which gives such privileges to a governing class at the expense of the workers? - - -"

1. Morel to Holt, 2 Jan. 1913., F8/4, EDMP.
On the information from Jonathan Holt, Morel told Holt, "The people in Lagos have got swelled heads; the whole pack of them, including the Educated Natives. I quite agree with Deemin, the whole expenditure of the Western Province wants cutting down - - -"
2. Holt to Morel, 26 Sept. 1909. F8/3, EDMP.

become a real administration with all the paraphernalia which were thought to be necessary for public order and modern development. Moreover, the Jeremiah-like comparison which the Third Party always made with the West Indies was very misleading. The West Indies was an 18th century slave society, whose planter economy was in ruins. West Africa was a peasant society, developing new urban centres whose economy was expanding, and where therefore there was a very strong case and justification for capital in-flow. Nevertheless, the case of the Third Party was not so much against advancement of initial and necessary capital to the colonies as against its extravagant 'spending'; they alleged that much of the money earmarked for development of the West African colonies never went into this development but were pocketed by favoured monopolists. An examination of the position of the Crown Agents, motives behind railway construction, and the economic implications of the various trading monopolies, in West Africa, will serve to show that much of the grumblings of these reformers were not conjured up from thin air.

The institution of Crown Agents¹ had been a source

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1. For the history of the Crown Agents and its manner of doing business see CO 885/19, Miscel. No.223. also A.W. Abbott, A short History of the Crown Agents and their office. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959).

of persistent questionings almost from its inception, but it always managed to weather the storms. The most systematic criticism would seem to have been made towards the end of the 19th century. On 7 April 1881, a Member of Parliament (Anderson) had asked in the Commons whether the Government wanted the public to understand that the Crown Agents were servants of the Crown and that the British Government was responsible for their actions. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Grant Duff, while replying in the negative, told Parliament that "they were servants of the Colonial Government, paid from Colonial not Imperial funds, nor is Her Majesty's Government in any way responsible for their actions." Therefore, on 4 May 1881, the same Anderson put down notice of a motion "to call attention to the anomalous position of officers who are called 'Crown Agents' for the Colonies and yet are not servants of the Crown, who are appointed by the Government, instructed by the Government to issue loans, and yet whose actions the Government denies all responsibility, and to move that in the opinion of this House conditions so contradictory are misleading to the public and to investors and ought to be changed". Grant Duff was almost powerless against this heady motion. He minuted that "the name is of course somewhat clumsy and

we cannot defend it too strongly if it is seriously attacked".¹

At the beginning of the 20th century criticism came from many sides; from Parliament, from humanitarian reformers, and from the Colonies. This criticism had become so incessant that in 1901 Chamberlain had tried to find out the attitude of the Governors of Crown Colonies and High Commissioners of Protectorates to the "Commercial Business transacted by the Crown Agents to the Colonies." In a circular despatch, he intimated that from time to time complaints had reached him from certain of the Colonies of mistakes or neglect on the part of the Crown Agents in regard to commercial business entrusted to them. He then wanted them to inform him whether they were "entirely satisfied with the relations between the Crown Agents and the Colony which you administer, and if not, to furnish me with particulars of any instances in which - - you have reason to believe that the commercial interest of the Colony under your Government have not been adequately protected by the Crown Agents".²

1. Memo. by A.J.Harding, 2 April 1908, CO 885/19 Misc. No.223. C.P.
There is no reference, however that Anderson ever moved his motion.

2. Chamberlain to Governors, 1 June 1901. Confidential Circular Despatch, CO 885/8 Misc. No.142.

Almost all the West African Governors, except Sir William MacGregor, said they were satisfied. The Governor of Sierra Leone, Sir C.A. King-Harman "unhesitatingly" stated that "the greatest satisfaction" was given by the Crown Agents. But his feeling that "the admirable management of the financial business more than counterbalances any shortcomings with regard to the filling of orders"¹ was certainly ominous. The Governor of Gambia reported that "matters have been conducted in a satisfactory manner."² Major Nathan of the Gold Coast said that "very few real causes for complaint in this colony existed - - -"³ Sir Ralph Moor of Southern Nigeria was of the opinion that relations were generally satisfactory and commercial interests generally protected by the Crown Agents. He paid glowing "tribute to the Crown Agents for the expeditious and satisfactory manner in which stores, supplies, equipment etc. for the ^Avo Expedition have been purchased and sent out", and did not suppose that there was "any business firm in the United Kingdom that would have executed the work more promptly and satisfactorily."⁴

1. King-Harman to Chamberlain, 16 July 1901, Conf. No. 4
CO 885/8

2. Gov. Sir G.C. Denton to Chamberlain, 5 Aug 1901, no. 5 in (ibid)

3. Gov. Major Nathan to Chamberlain, 21 Nov. 1901, No. 24 in (ibid)

4. H.C. Sir Ralph Moor to Chamberlain, 30 Nov. 1901. No. 27
in (ibid).

These Governors had emphasised the good work of the Crown Agents, but even from their replies, it is obvious that they tried to suppress the criticisms of the system which came from their more professional subordinates. Thus in Sierra Leone, there was evidence that the Heads of Public Works and Railway Departments, whose requirements through the medium of the Crown Agents far exceeded those of any other departments there, had complained of delays in obtaining articles and materials long indented. Even the otherwise completely satisfied Harman had at the same time remarked: "Dissatisfaction is not infrequently caused by a tendency which, rightly or wrongly, is attributed to the Crown Agents to attach more importance to the excuses or denials of incriminated agents or firms than to the remonstrances of the Colonial Governments, who believe themselves to be aggrieved by delay or by mismanagement in the execution of their duties - -". In the Gambia, there were complaints "of some instances of delay in the delivery of articles" long requisitioned, a roof ordered for a female hospital indented for in January 1901, did not arrive even in August of the same year. In the Gold Coast, also, there was evidence of avoidable delays; certain galvanized iron sheets for the roofs of the Police Barracks at Axim, Sekondi and Saltpond ordered on 14 August 1899 did not arrive till February of the following year. Even Sir Ralph Moor's eulogy could not easily suppress complaints

from the Marine Department in Southern Nigeria against the delay in arrival and quality of stores indented.¹

In the Colonial Office itself, different views were expressed after the Governors had reported their attitudes. J.F.N. Green, a second class clerk, was of the opinion that "the total number of complaints worthy of consideration is, considering the size and complexity of the Crown Agents' business, wonderfully small, and the general impression is that their office is thoroughly, and indeed remarkably, efficient". While pointing out that delays had certainly been frequent (for which he blamed the contractors employed by the Crown Agents), Green, however, endorsed the singular view of Sir. F. Sweetenham, High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States, who had made a serious case against the Crown Agents. Sweetenham had complained that the Crown Agents seemed to occupy a position "which is not exactly that of an Agent of the Colony, but rather of an independent authority prepared to execute the orders of the Colonial Government, with considerable limitations - - ". Green noted that Colonial officials were frequently hampered, delayed and sometimes blamed owing to delays in the supplies of stores, through mistakes not caused by them. Naturally,

¹ . CO 885/8, No.4,5,24 and 27.

Green continued they wanted to get at the persons responsible and to ensure that the same misfortune should not occur again; instead, they found that the Crown Agents disclaimed all blame, and yet stood as a "permanent buffer between them and the peccant contractor or shipper." He said that the Colonial officials felt that the Crown Agents with whom they dealt should be held responsible to them; but they had no way of making them feel the responsibility and were correspondingly exasperated. ¹

Green, therefore, made suggestions for improving matters. He was of the opinion that the only way of avoiding friction was for "more responsibility to be thrown on the Colony". This meant reducing the Crown Agents to the position of "agents pure and simple", obeying the orders of the Colony, the control of the Secretary of State being only exercised through the Governor, except in such matters as penalising contractors, or taking other action which might indirectly affect other Colonies by making firms less willing to tender. He also suggested a kind of annual handbook by the Crown Agents to "blow their trumpets loudly enough." ²

But an Acting Principal Clerk, G.W. Johnson, strongly deprecated "altering the present rule under which the

¹1. Minute of 12 Sept. 1902, CO 885/8.

2. Ibid.

Crown Agents do not comply with the requisitions without reference to this office, unless the proper authority for the expenditure is written on the requisition."¹ He explained that "this rule does not involve the Secretary of State exercising any control over the Crown Agents, but it is a necessary part of the control which he exercises over the government of the Crown Colonies - - -".²

Arthur A. Pearson, principal clerk at the time, also did not think much of the complaints preferred against the Crown Agents, except perhaps that of delay in execution of orders; he did not consider as genuine the complaints lodged against prices of commodities and delivery, quality of articles, and faulty packing mistakes.³ As far as West Africa was concerned, Charles Strachey, who was a first class clerk in that Department, found that the experience of his department was that the Crown Agents did their work well at times, but sometimes not well; though he did not believe that matters would improve under any other system. He was sceptical, however, of Green's suggestion that the Crown Agents should issue an annual commendation of their proceedings, in which all records of success would be brought prominently forward and nothing would be said of failures. This might appeal to the Crown Agents,

1 . Colonial Regulations Nos. 272 and 273.

2 . Minute of 22 Sept. 1902, CO 885/8.

3 . Minute of 7 Oct. 1902, CO 885/8.

he said, but it would induce the dissatisfied Colonies to blaspheme and to issue companion volumes. Moreover, he noted that it would surely be exasperating for a West African Governor, who was complaining against the supply of faulty rails, to be assured that the Transvaal received their stationery in record time.¹

It soon became obvious, however, that, all told, the Colonial Office was in favour of the Crown Agents continuing as previously. "With regard to the general question of the working of their system, the Crown Agents appear to be making all the improvements they can - - " ², minuted another principal clerk, F.R. Round. Chamberlain was equally convinced that this was so. Some months later, he informed the Colonial Governors that there was no cause for change in the position of the Crown Agents.³

This decision might have quietened the Colonial officials who having known the feelings of their energetic chief were not tempted to incur his displeasure. To Morel, who may well have been told ^{of} the correspondence by his friend, Charles Strachey, it was a signal for renewed protest.

1. Minute of 22 Oct. 1902, CO 885/8

2. Minute of 22 Oct. 1902 by Round, CO 885/8.

3. Chamberlain to Governors etc. Circular Despatch, 25 Aug. 1903, CO 885/8. C.P. also conveyed later by his successor Lytton in a circular despatch of 26 Feb. 1904. See P.P., 1904 (Cd. 1944).

In his Affairs of West Africa, published soon after, Morel listed the institution of Crown Agents as one of the imperative reforms, making a very severe condemnation of the institution.

"If anyone attempted to define the duties of that body, he would be hard put to it to do so. They are here, there and anywhere, and their interference puts a premium upon extravagance and waste. The Crown Agents are an anomaly which ought to disappear. At present they constitute a sort of half-way house between the Colonial Office and the West African Governors, and are a positive obstacle to sound finance and good business methods - - - The West African Colonies are hampered right and left by the powers conferred upon this body. The Colonies are not allowed to purchase what they require in the shape of stores, equipment, material and so forth in the open market. Everything has to go through the Crown Agents, with the natural result that the Colonies have to pay between ^{one} per cent and fifty per cent more than they would have to if allowed to invite tenders on their own account - - "

Having denounced the system, Morel in the same book pointed out particular examples to illustrate the extravagance caused by the Crown Agents. He alleged that railway construction in West Africa had become the monopoly of one particular firm under the direction of the Crown Agents, a firm which, it was alleged, was not very experienced in such work, and which was , "metaphorically speaking, falling upon its feet in West Africa."² The same criticism applied to the position of consulting

1 . E.D. Morel, Affairs of West Africa (1902) Pp. 30-31.

2 . Ibid, P.31. The firm was Shelford and Sons, Ltd.

engineers to the Colonial Office. Morel felt it was anomalous from the business standpoint for a firm retained as "consulting engineers" to a Government Department to carry out the actual construction of the West African Railways - to play the adviser and arbiter at the same time was to Morel incompatible. He supported the widespread impression that the time and cost of constructing these railways through the departmental system had been excessive.¹ To support his allegation that all ranks in West Africa were opposed to the "Departmental System" (which in fact meant the Crown Agents system) he cited the remarks made by Sir William MacGregor when he attended the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1900. In reply to a question by Arthur Hutton, chairman of the African Trade Section, whether he thought that railway construction could be better done by contract, MacGregor in condemning the departmental system said that "there would be men living who are now rotting in their graves if it had been taken out of the control of the Crown Agents - -"²

References to mortal accidents caused on railways badly

1. For example, the Gold Coast Railway, begun in Feb. 1898, which was officially estimated to reach Kumasi in 1904, amounted to taking 6 years to build 169½ miles. Morel considered even the unreliable official estimate for the Sekondi-Tarkwa sector of £8000 per mile and £6,300 for Tarkwa-Kumasi section as too high; ibid, p.32
2. Report of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1900. Also Morel, Affairs of West Africa, op.cit.

constructed by the Crown Agents continued to be made.

Apart from this, Morel did not see how the Crown Agents could claim to know more about the material needs of the Colonies than the officials in charge of the Colonies themselves. After citing two glaring instances ¹ to disprove this claim, Morel declared that the Crown Agents were looked upon in official and commercial circles in West Africa "as an unmitigated nuisance and a stumbling-block to progress." ²

When the Crown Agents saw what Morel had published about them, they protested to the Secretary of State. ² The publication definitely caused disquiet in official circles, for almost immediately after ^{wards} Chamberlain directed Reginald Antrobus to correct Morel's impressions and factual mistakes. More important, he stoutly defended the Crown Agents:

"The Crown Agents are not an independent body and have no power to interfere in the management of any Colony. They are appointed by the Secretary of State, who fixes their salaries and also the charges payable for business transacted by their department. They are the agents of the Colonial Governments and act only upon instructions given to them either by the Governments themselves or by the Secretary of State in the exercise of his control over the administration of the

1 . He cited the engine for the light railway, and the scheme for a bridge construction, both in Lagos.
See, Affairs of West Africa, p.33

2 . Ibid, p.34.

3 . CA to CO, 4 March 1903 and encl. CO 147/168.

Crown Colonies. The rule requiring stores to be obtained through them is one that has been laid down and maintained by successive Secretaries of State on the ground that the natural result of the rule is to reduce and not to increase the prices which the Colonies have to pay, and Mr. Chamberlain sees no reason to doubt that stores are obtained by Colonial Governments through the Crown Agents on better terms than they could be obtained in any other way - - -"¹

The Colonial Secretary, therefore, took great exception to Morel's criticisms, using a few minor errors of fact to cover up what would seem to be a convincing case of unbusinesslike transactions. Chamberlain based his argument on the necessity of continuing traditional government policy and the economic necessity of the institution.^{2"}

Against these ideas Morel expressed the general feeling in West African Colonies (inspite of the equivocal reports of Governors other than MacGregor) that the institution of Crown Agents was not to the good of the Colonies, and this feeling, he alleged, existed with respect to the construction, organisation and management of railways, and with regard to the supplying of Colonial stores and material for other public works. He could not accept Chamberlain's excuse of economic necessity:

"I gather that so far as railway construction is concerned the feeling is based upon the assumption that the work would be more cheaply and efficiently performed by contractors. In connection with the supplying of

1. Antrobus to Morel, 17 July 1903, official; F9/A-B, EDMP.
 2. Ibid.,

stores and material the feeling is based on the assumption that greater economy would be effected if a demand for public tenders were regularly made on the open market, for all material and stores intended for the consumption of the West African Colonies - - I cannot help thinking that the existing system does not make for efficiency or economy - -"

In order to find out which was more efficient and economical, railway construction under the Departmental system or by contractors, Morel demanded an open enquiry for data on the subject to be placed before the public.

In fairness to Chamberlain, it must be remembered that it is always a difficult matter to alter expedients which have been sanctified by custom and usage. Yet this by no means invalidates the arguments advanced by Morel; the most relevant consideration was whether better results could be secured if each colony was allowed to purchase its requirements on the open market, benefitting by competition in the fullest and widest sense, instead of having to pass orders through the Crown Agents which meant restriction of competition to a specific number of selected firms, which, Morel alleged, might "possibly leave the door open to a mutual understanding amongst these firms not to underquote one another". Moreover, as Morel contended, the Crown Agents might legitimately be regarded

1. Morel to Antobus, March 1904. copy F9/A-B, EDMF.

as middlemen, between the Colonies and the manufacturers of the stores and materials required by the Colonies. Therefore it could be argued that stores were more expensive to the original purchaser if he employed the services of a middleman who received a commission. Morel questioned the necessity of this intermediate agency:

"_ - - -I understand the Crown Agents are authorised to charge commission on stores supplied by them, which commission forms the funds from which their salaries are derived - - on the transaction. In West Africa our policy has been to remove the middleman. Would it not conduce to stimulating a more wider interest in the possibilities of West Africa on the part of the manufacturers if the door were flung open to general competition by public tender? - -"

It might be recalled that Morel had given four illustrations to prove his charge that the Crown Agents were a liability to the West African Colonies, viz, the engine for the Lagos railway, the bridge over the Five-Cowrie Creek in Lagos, the steam hopper also in Lagos, and Sir William MacGregor's opinions.² Chamberlain had proved him wrong in some of these by exaggerating the minor mistakes Morel made with respect to the Lagos railway and the commission charged by the Crown Agents. But the case made by Morel for the rest was unanswerable, based as it was on the official reports themselves.

1 . Morel to Antrobus, March 1904 Copy F9/A-B EDMP.

2 . Affairs of West Africa, p.33 and ff.

In his message to the Lagos Legislative Council, when presenting the estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1902-3, Sir William MacGregor had remarked:

"There can be no doubt as to the urgent need for a suitable and substantial bridge over the Five-Cowrie-Creek inlet. The cost of repairing the wooden structure has averaged for several years £375 a year. Add to this that it is often interrupted and frequently dangerous.

"Plans were sent to England and materials asked for to build the new bridge. But instead of the materials came new plans for a bridge which amongst other things was designed to carry a watermain; naturally it was not shewn where the water was to come from" 1

Chamberlain cleared the Crown Agents and accepted responsibility for this misunderstanding of the colonial need; but, then, his readiness to bear the brunt was both suspicious and unhelpful to the colonies.

Moreover, Morel's reference to the steam-hopper was also a reflection of official complaints. In the same report, MacGregor had said:

"You are all sensible of the fact that it is most desirable that something be done wherever and whenever possible to facilitate the removal of town refuse. You will remember that last year two plans were considered, removal by a Steam-Hopper or by Tramway. Neither plan found acceptance by the Colonial Office. It is doubtful that any remedy that would cost less than £100,000 will ever be approved by the Engineers" 2

1. Quoted at length in Morel to Antrobus, copy March 1904, F9, EDMP.
2. Ibid.

It would seem, therefore, that Morel's criticisms were grounded on facts.

Chamberlain might wish to silence criticism, but official reports were still complaining of the Crown Agents system. A report on the working of the Lagos railway in the first half of 1902 talked of engines in a "defective condition - when the line was opened to traffic"; and "the inability" was spoken of "up to now to do more than keep them in service for traffic requirements". There were twenty-eight engine failures during this half year". The report continued: "With an average of only six engines in service this high percentage of failures is disquieting". Again, in another part of the report the "defective condition of the engines" was further insisted upon, and the "frequent failure of locomotive power" was referred to.¹

It was, therefore, not for nothing that Morel had insisted that economy and efficiency would be ensured if the Colonies were allowed to tender openly for their requirements. If the failures described above could be attributed to other factors (possibly climatic), the high price of working the engines was mainly due to the high prices of stores, in particular the "contract" for coal, which were procured through the instrumentality of the Crown Agents. The report alluded to commented as follows:

1. Lagos Railway Administrative Report, 1902

"The adverse effect of working charges has, however, been increased by the very high price at which the coal contracts for the railway have been made. The Railway Management has not been advised about the particulars of these contracts which apparently are arranged directly between the Colonial Secretary of the Lagos Government and the Crown Agents."¹

It was, therefore, believed that the prices paid were "disproportionately high" and "excessive". Moreover, from enquiries he had made on the subject, Morel was of the opinion that since the average price of good Welsh steam coal in 1903 was about 14 shillings a ton delivered at the tip of the Welsh ports, it might have been possible to get coal out to Lagos in a steamer able to cross the bar at between 30 and 35 shillings per ton, instead of at the fantastic current cost of 50 shillings a ton. Morel clinched his case in rhetorical style:

"- - -It appears to favour the contention which was the main object I had in view, viz, that a system of full and open competition in all branches of supply would result in considerable economy to the Colonies. That is my honest opinion and I believe that systematic enquiry would prove it. The principle holds good in commercial affairs. Why not in the case of a local Government's purchases? - - -"²

Despite these strong arguments, Chamberlain did not change the system. The Crown Agents system was a time-honoured institution which gave those in power an opportunity to bestow patronages to favourites; and if the

¹ Ibid.

² Morel to Antrobus, March 1904, copy, F9/A-B, EDMP.

end was served, it did not seem to matter what the Colonies lost in the process. Holt made this point in a letter to Morel:

"The Crown Agents, like some of the other government departments, like this private selection business; it gives them beautiful opportunities to bestow patronage, but it is apt to open the door to many abuses, and is certainly a most extravagant way of pretending to serve the interests of our Crown Colonies. What they do in materials they do in freight; can they apply the same reasons for not giving all British shipowners an opportunity of carrying out material at the lowest possible rate? How is it that coal contracts for Lagos are not put to open competition? If they were there is no doubt that the government could get steamers to carry out coal today at 10/6d per ton, as against the rates that they are paying other people. All this means fining the Colonies heavily and preventing their economical development to that extent. These Colonies are handicapped to a degree by such methods which would be ludicrous if they were not knavish - - - "1

These criticisms once more echoed in Parliament. On 28 March 1904, Austin Taylor, M.P. for Liverpool, told the Commons that the price of 50 shillings per ton charged for Lagos coal in 1902 was excessive. Arguing in a vein similar to Morel's, he said that the best South Wales coal could be bought in Britain for 15 shillings per ton; and since the freight rate "to West Africa under ordinary circumstances would not exceed 15 shillings, he felt that 30 shillings a ton¹ should be the appropriate cost of coal. Taylor, therefore, was "at a loss to account for the extra

1. Holt to Morel, 1 Nov. 1902., F8/2, EDMP.

20 shillings which brought up the price to 50 shillings per ton" - a price against ^{what} the Lagos railway department lodged a complaint, with the result that in 1903 they were allowed to buy the coal direct. On the general question of the operation of the Crown Agents as they affected the Colonies, Taylor was at the same time most critical. The whole question, according to him, was really one which could be called 'Tied-house Imperialism'; "The Colonies were compelled to come to this country for the whole of their stores and materials for their public works, whether telegraphs, railways, bridges, iron piping, or electrical appliances." He doubted whether the Colonies and Protectorat were being supplied as efficiently and economically by the Crown Agents as they might be under a more elastic system of open competition. He was of the opinion that ^{since} the system of Crown Agents was expensive and dilatory, the Secretary should have the courage to set it aside. Moreover, it was a matter of surprise to Taylor that these gentlemen (i.e. the Crown Agents) "should be operating enormous sums year after year entirely outside the purview of the House of Commons, and without any means being afforded for having a discussion on their accounts year by year". He concluded by suggesting that the Crown Agents accounts should be "laid on the table of the

House", and then implored the Commons that if they were to think imperia lly they might turn their attention to prosaic duties of the nature he had indicated.¹

Another member, F.L. Harris, alleged that the Crown Agents were engaged in transactions which involved "the receipt and payment of stupendous sums of money"; that they enjoyed unlimited powers, and were quite beyond the control of the Colonial Secretary, and that they owed no responsibility either to the House of Commons or to the Legislative Assemblies of the Colonies, who were forced to employ their services. He contended that since he understood that the financial transactions of the Crown Agents for the Colonies in recent years amounted to no less than the combined estimates for the Army and Navy, these transactions should be submitted to Parliament for criticism and review. ² On the same occasion, Sydney Buxton

1. H.C. Debs.45. Vol.132, 1904, 935,936,937.
Taylor, Austin, 2nd son of Archdeacon Taylor D.D., Educ. Liverpool Coll; Corpus Christi, Cambridge, M.A.(1910). Shipowner (retired 1912); entered City Council of Liverpool, 1892, 1900. M.P. for East Toxteth Division of Liverpool, 1902-10; Chairman Westminster Hospital, 1925-28. Author of Sidelights on Protection. Died 27 April 1955.

2. HC. Debs.45.Vol.132, 1904, 939.
Harris, Rt.Hon.Frederick Leverton, P.C.1916. Born 17 Dec 1864; Son of F.W. Harris, J.P. Educ. Winchester and Cambridge (M.A.); Member of Tariff Commission, 1904; Conservative M.P. for Tynemouth 1900-06; and Unionist M.P. Stepney, 1907-11; M.P. E.Worcestershire,1914-18; L.C.C. Stepney, 1907-10. Published various articles on Tariff Reform. Club Carlton. Died 14 Nov.1926.

felt bound to admit that "too much mystery surrounded the Crown Agents' Office" which, he said, "ought to be dissolved by some form of inquiry. He alleged that they were allowed to spend large sums of public money without control; that they were dilatory, unbusinesslike and expensive in their operations; and that a system under which orders had necessarily to be placed in Britain, "did a great deal to discourage local enterprise" in the colonies. He supported Taylor's demand for a Committee to inquire into this business.¹

In the Lords, the Crown Agents were subjected to the most scathing criticism. Before putting his six searching questions,² the Earl of Portsmouth made important preliminary remarks which show the public attitude to this question: As he said, he had in the previous two weeks received "a very large number of private communications

1 . HC. Debs 45. Vol.132, 1904, 939-40.

In the same year the House of Commons therefore called for a return of the accounts of the Crown Agents' office funds:

P.P., 1904 (Cd.2241).

2 . (1)Whether the Crown Agents for the Colonies receive fixed salaries for their services in connection with the Colonies and protectorates they represent; (2)What those salaries are; (3)Whether the Crown Agents are permitted to levy a percentage on expenditure or any operation undertaken by them as Crown Agents; (4)What is the amount of this percentage; (5)Are annual returns made by the Crown Agents to the Colonial Office showing exactly what sums they have received by the levying of this percentage; (6)Whether they receive additional salaries or allowances from the Colonies."

from responsible persons who have had experience in this matter' It would not be proper to disclose their names; yet there certainly appeared to be a very general and widespread complaint as to the manner in which the Crown Agents have performed some of their duties - - - I have been told not by people who do not know, but by those who speak with authority - - that there does obtain the very bad practice of giving Crown Agents commissions on the expenditure which has passed through their hands and through their office".

He asked what had been done about the "very serious complaints" lodged by Governor MacGregor in 1903 as regards the inefficiency in the construction of the railways managed by the Crown Agents. When the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Duke of Marlborough, explained that the Crown Agents charged 1% on all stores supplied, Portsmouth retorted, "if so, then the greater the expenditure, the greater the commission". And when Marlborough explained that he meant "on all work carried out by them", Portsmouth added: "Then the greater the cost of the stores the greater the commission". Marlborough had to agree with him, his explanatory point that "their one desire is to supply the stores at the cheapest possible price" was not convincing especially as he said that it was not the Imperial Government but the Crown Colonies that paid these commissions.¹

Thus Earl Grey was of the opinion that the information

1.H.L. Debs.45.Vol.CXXX 1904, 946,948,950,953-4.

which Marlborough had given to the effect that the expense of the offices of the Crown Agents was debited to the various Crown Colonies affected "supplies us with an additional reason for being most jealous as to the way in which that office performs its duties". He continued: "I understand that the Crown Colony is affected and not the British taxpayer if the administration of that office is lax and expensive". Refuting the defence that the Crown Agents were the best buyers that could be found in Britain (by citing the experience of Sir Harry Johnston with them), Earl Grey agreed with Portsmouth that an impartial inquiry was necessary "inspite of the eulogy" on that office by Marlborough.¹ A motion moved by Portsmouth at that instance "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the system by which the Crown Agents of the Colonies are paid, and their methods of transacting the duties attaching to their office," was, however, negatived.²

Because the operations of the Crown Agents particularly

1. H.L. Debs.45. CXXX 1904, 954,955,956.

Some time, Sir Harry Johnston, when he was Commissioner of Br. Central Africa, had requisitioned for a steamer for Lake Nyasa. By private tender he found that this would cost £8,000; but when he went through the CA, he was told the price would be £13,000. Sir Harry refused to order through the CA, and went straight to the P.M. Lord Salisbury who decided that in this case there was reason to depart from the usual custom. The steamer was built for £8,000 and was called "Lady Gwendolen" as a compliment to Salisbury.

2. See A.W. Abbott, op.cit. P.29.

affected the overall problem of railway constructional costs, the attitude of the third Party on this question must be examined. Mary Kingsley had participated in the arguments regarding railway routing in the Gold Coast.¹ She had opposed the Sekondi-Kumasi route which was, however, later adopted. Her first contention had been that "a good deal of it" would "be along a piece of country that could be worked by water, the River Ancobra". Secondly, the Colonial Office had dropped the hint that that route was "a sort of experimental section and that by and by if it pays it will make the rest of it up to up to Ashanti", Kingsley argued that since this had to go through a very expensive sort of country for a railway, dampish and waterlogged ('and it might not pay right at once'), then it meant that the remaining section would not be built. She was opposed to the Accra route because "that route would

1. Dr. Flint in his Reassessment has shown that 'although she never attacked railways in principle, she was scathing and sarcastic about each of the proposed schemes. In a letter of 29 April 1898, Kingsley told Holt that Baden Powell 'got up at the Colonial Institute talking on railways and all manner of 'tommy rot', winding up by saying "Administer! Administer!"; and added that 'Nothing short of an earthquake in Westminster is going to stop this 'Administration' fad, and West Africa will be another West Indies only with bigger cemeteries, unless Chamberlain can be persuaded to entirely recast the administration of these colonies - - -'. As ever the question of costs, in railways construction as in other realms of administration, is the primary consideration.

go through a district that from its nature won't pay at all, but it would be a drier route, and the Colonial Office would not have had a chance at the rate its intelligence works of finding out until the railway is finished;"¹ she was thinking of the Uganda Railway. In the event, Mary Kingsley became disillusioned with the whole idea of railway construction in the Gold Coast, explaining this lack of enthusiasm by pointing at the absence of any strategic necessity for them and the unsettled condition of the interior. She told Holt that "since the Niger Convention we are cut off, from reaching the Niger in its middle course by means of one"(i.e. railway); moreover, she claimed that according to information she received, "that the state of Ashanti is bad - the sickness among the troops has been dreadful up there, a sort of yellow fever - - and the natives have left Kumasi and now come flooding in as was expected." To her, this was not a propitious moment to construct railways. But if one was to be built at all, it had better go to the mining districts and no more.² But Kingsley's lack of support for railways did not affect policy. The Railway Ordinance of 1898 gave the government powers to acquire necessary lands for the line and railway stations. A loan of £220,000 for the Sekondi-Tarkwa² sector was

1. Kingsley to Holt, 21 Sept. 1898, 16/2, JHP.

2. Ibid.

raised in Britain using the resources of the Gold Coast Colony as security. In the same year the construction started in Sekondi; the line reached Tarkwa in 1901, Obuasi in 1902 and finally arrived at Kumasi at the end of 1903. As will^{be}/shown, the criticisms which were made against this railway construction which proved very expensive, were similar to those Morel had made about absurdity of the railway advisers undertaking the later construction. There was also a lot of antagonism between the resident engineers, who had no sound knowledge of local economic conditions, and the Colonial officials who had. In the event, the line was completed only in 1903 after two large Imperial loans to the tune of £665,000 and £360,000 were made available, and the railway charges on the Gold Coast were highest among the West African Colonies.²

It is here not so much intended to make a historical sketch of railways in West Africa as to expose some aspects in these transactions which are not well known. The force

1 . On 5 Jan. 1903, Thomas Bayley, Liberal M.P., had told Morel that it was "really the height of business incompetency" that a salaried engineer should "have the making of the Railway". He said that "such a method of doing business in public affairs must lead to all sorts of irregularities", and requested that Morel should write to the Times or the Liverpool papers on the subject. In Parliament, Bayley himself questioned the role of Messrs. Shelford in the construction of these Colonial railways.

2 . CO 879/91; African (West) No. 803.

with which several schemes for railway construction were thrown at the Colonial Office during the period covered by this study tended to cover up the real motives behind some of these agitations. The Gold Coast Railway proved to be economically necessary, but this did not imply that Sir Alfred Jones, who particularly canvassed in favour of its construction, was inspired by this economical development of the Colony. It is possible that since railways were primarily import-export lines, Elder, Dempster and Company would have more freight; it is more possible, however, that he supported railway constructions either in the Gold Coast or elsewhere in West Africa, because since his firm had the monopoly of shipping, he would carry the railway materials at extravagant cost to the Colonies.

It should be emphasised that John Holt was not averse to the idea of railways per se. He had even participated in the hysterical demand for railways in West Africa, and in 1892 had told the Colonial Office that seventy miles of railway into Yorubaland was a more civilizing agency than a battalion of missionaries.¹ After 'political' arguments between the Nigerian officials, the Lagos-Ibadan line was completed in March 1901 at a cost of one million pounds. At the same time talks began about

1. Holt to CO, 16 Dec. 1892, Copy. JHP.

extending the Ibaden railway and other railway routes in Nigeria, and new schemes in Sierra Leone, but not before John Holt had realised what had caused the high costs of the railways. He then began to oppose further extension of railways in West Africa. He did not regard railways as useless but was against the practice of constructing railways at uneconomic costs. Being particularly sceptical of the intentions of the railway propagandists, he channelled all his arguments via sound economic considerations in favour of the West African Colonies.

After the death of Mary Kingsley, Holt became a lone voice in the wilderness of materialism which had siezed the British Chambers of Commerce. Although nominally a member of the Liverpool Chamber, who had shown remarkable interest in its affairs, Morel was not actually admitted by the Liverpool merchant community as one of them; and in any case, he did not see through the true temper behind the railway agitation until Holt rallied him. Moreover, the reformism of Alfred Emmett, though apparent at meetings of the Oldham and Manchester Chambers of Commerce, was reflected outside mere antile gatherings. Until he made Morel understand the selfish gusto behind Sir Alfred Jones's agitation for railways everywhere, Holt alone (until Parliament took it up) tried to stem the swelling tide of extravagance veiled in 'estate' development. In May 1902

when the rest of the Committee of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce voted in favour of a Sierra Leone Mountain Railway, Holt not only voted against the measure, but also "laughed at the thing - as a piece of tom-foolery, which none of them would undertake if they had to pay it themselves."¹ And when Sir Alfred Jones, feeling that his own enthusiasm was justified, informed Holt that the Sierra Leone Railway had started making profits, Holt cynically doubted the whole thing.² He was of the opinion that most of these railways had been built extravagantly, and wanted the extension of railways to cease. Referring to the Sierra Leone Railway, which was built in spite of him, he told Morel that they should not "advocate more railway building until we can get rid of the knaves and fools who are emptying the colonial treasuries - if that ever be possible."³

1. Holt to Morel, 26 May 1902.

The contemplated mountain railway was merely a five mile distance which, according to Holt, "any man of average energy could work daily, and not kill himself". Against the view that the occupation of the hills was vital for health reasons, Holt told the Liverpool Chamber that the Germans were then occupying the Cameroon hills where they had cows and farms on European footing, got their milk regularly, made their own butter and cheese, and lived on a comparatively healthy altitude, much higher than anyone could hope to get in Sierra Leone. He said that it took 5 days to get there (i.e. in the Cameroons) but the Germans still could occupy it and transact Government business from there, and yet it was 'perfectly healthy'!

2. Holt to Morel, 21 Nov 1900, F8/1, EDMF.
3. Holt to Morel, 23 Oct. 1902, F8/2, EDMF.

Holt diagnosed this extravagance as resulting from the determination of the Colonial Office and the Crown Agents not to put the buying and transportation of the railway materials and other Government stores to public tender:

"I would put it to Mr. Chamberlain, as a businessman does he not think that if the buying of the railway materials and government stores generally were in his hands he could not by open public tender for these and for the freight therein save tens of thousands a year for the West African Colonies. I would point out what an important bearing such a saving would have on the development of these Colonies; how greatly extravagance or waste of any kind directly retards such development. Economy of working is absolutely necessary if we are not going to present to the world another instance of Colonial Office incapacity to that awful object-lesson we have in the West Indies for which Mr. Chamberlain has no other cure than does of money extracted from the British tax-payer - - -".¹

He regarded it as a disgrace to British administrative capacity that any tropical Colony should be found in such an impecunious position as not to finance its railway projects. He was convinced that there was absolutely no cause for this situation except the extravagance and incompetence of the machinery employed to manage these affairs. The French experience, to him, was not always so sombre:

"Look over the border of Lagos and see what the French are doing by economical working. They have revenue enough to run their administration on lines simple but quite sufficient for the protection of life and property. They build their railways besides out of

1. Holt to Morel, 26 July 1903, F8/2, EDMP.

their revenue whilst we have to borrow an enormous sum of money to do ours in Lagos - -"1

And he did not regard as a cogent explanation the views of MacGregor that the French Colonial Governments gave land grants to the railway contractors; firstly, because it meant giving away "other people's property in part payment", but particularly because it was quite an unnecessary procedure. Indeed, contractors were not needed at all there, since Dahomey, he said, could have found from her revenue all the money needed for not only making the permanent way but also for providing stations, engines and wagons.²

The Colonial Office never liked comparison of British and French Colonies; but Holt always advised Morel to continue to do this in the African Mail.³ This was not merely a strategical move to counter the general belief in the excellence of British colonial rule; it provided Holt with that disgust which always seemed to inspire his denunciation of Colonial Office bureaucratic methods. Thus he saw no reason why Lagos, or any other British Colony in West Africa, could not imitate the economical methods of French Dahomey. According to him, this was impossible because of the "ridiculous ideas which

1. Holt to Morel, 26 July 1903, F8/2, EDMP.

2. Ibid.

3. Holt to Morel, 19 Oct. 1903, F8/2, EDMP.

permeate the official mind", their selfishness and incompetence and Chamberlain's ambitious programme:

"- - -They spend the money on themselves and do as little as they can for it. The Colonies are feeding places for the misfits of London and if you doubled the revenue every year these people would spend it all and more if they can borrow. What care they? They are birds of passage with no permanent interest in the places. I am of opinion that if worked on economic lines our West African Colonies could build all the necessary railways without asking favours of anyone. It has been the pride of these Colonies to keep out of debt until Chamberlain came and inspite of increased duties and revenues far beyond all proportional increase of trade out of which to pay them, there are three of them now with big debts round their necks, and another taking £350,000 a year out of the foolish British taxpayer who is too rich or too big a fool not to see through the game that is going on."¹⁷

It might be argued that since Holt himself would have wished to be favoured with these contracts, he tended to exaggerate the shortcomings of those who were favoured and sourly hinted at corrupt motives in the officials and Crown Agents who influenced these awards. It is possible also that the glorious picture which he painted of the economic life of these Colonies before Chamberlain arrived could not be sustained with plausible evidence; in other words, that his impressions were a romantic illusion from the haze of time. But it will be pointed out too that many of these transactions were regarded by others as very questionable; that the only conclusion which seems most tenable is that these contracts provided avenues for

1. Holt to Morel, 26 July 1903, F8/2, EDMP.

patronage; and that when the Government bestowed these patronage, it did not always count the cost for the colonies.

Although the Third Party humanitarians always dropped the broad hint that some Ministers and permanent officials were not only incompetent but also corrupt, they saw Sir Alfred Jones as the bête noire of the whole transaction. The personal relationship between Jones and the various sectors of the establishment was close. He was Chamberlain's confidant, but also his sycophant, and as already noted, could sacrifice a friend for financial expediency. He maintained fervent ties with politicians of all parties, cultivating a keen friendship with the leadership of each. Ministers in charge of Colonial and Foreign Offices were probably his most important friends; while his pervasive influence held almost every West African governor to ransom. There is no evidence to show that the permanent officials were enamoured of him, but they feared his political and economic power. There can be no doubt that Jones was pushful, energetic, foresighted and strenuous. But he was also unscrupulous, ambivalent, hypocritical and uncandid. His single aim in life was a consuming ambition for economic predominance; he, therefore, did not care how he achieved his economic ends. Though perspicacious and zealous, it does not seem that Jones was particularly over-endowed with either intellectual or business acumen; but as often happens,

people like him who succeed in business are credited with intuition they may not have possessed. He advertised a sense of Imperialism which was fashionable at the time, but his patriotism may well have been less intense than personal considerations and desire for economic power. He was in essence a conservative in politics, but he would pass as a non-party man when conservative fortunes were low. His ambition for economic power was substantially achieved; he secured monopoly of shipping, Crown Agents' contracts, supply of silver and other coinage to West Africa, and its banking. He directed the British Cotton Growing Association, using his influence to secure Imperial grants or subsidies for some of these enterprises which he advertised as imperial missions. He was generally regarded as a personal friend of Holt's, but Jones did his friend incalculable harm behind his back.¹

Holt himself regarded the whole imperial and patriotic pose in Jones as a sham. He saw the swaggering cotton dinners as destitute of true imperial interests and as

1. For different views of A.L. Jones vide, A.H. Milne, Sir Alfred Lewis Jones, K.C.M.G. (Liverpool, 1914), a rather uncritical work which must be read with discrimination, and P.N. Davies, Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade, (Unpublished, Liverpool M.A. thesis, 1964)

really Jones's promotions desired to mislead others for his own interests. He was of the opinion that Jones advocated railways not because he cared for their development value (which in any case favoured Jones as well), but primarily because he wanted to receive the carrying trade of the constructional materials. Even Mary Kingsley, who was not opposed to Jones, had agreed with Holt that the gusto with which Jones canvassed the Gold Coast railway construction was connected either with his interest in the gold concessions or with the freight of the constructional materials.¹ It is possible that this attitude was in harmony with natural commercial instincts; one feels, however, that even commerce has its ethical maxims. Jones' idea was : "build railways anyhow, but build them."² He was reported to have told the Imperial Institute in August 1904 "that he did not care about the cost of those railways, that West Africa must have them whatever the cost may be".³ Holt condemned these as "the sentiments of a prodigal spendthrift which if acted upon either individually

1. Kingsley to Holt, 21 Sept. 1898, 16/2, JHP.
In this letter she told Holt how she had "hurt" the "feelings" of Jones by telling him that "he was not hit by errors because freight was freight". She was referring to errors in colonial administration which led to waste of funds.
2. Holt to Morel, 13 June 1910, F8/4, EDMP.
3. Holt to Morel, 5 Aug. 1904, F8/2, EDMP.

or collectively must lead to disaster", and cynically remarked that these bloated views of Jones were "in accordance with our latest modern ideas of economy à la Chamberlain and the fiscal school of politicians + - -"¹ There was no doubt in his mind that "all the railways we have built in West Africa could have been built for half the cost; so that the other half represents waste and plunder."² He explained his stand on railways to Morel:

"I was always with Jones and Ellis Edwards over building railways on sound economic lines, but not on wasteful lines, such as I saw they were going to do, when the Liverpool Chamber advocated railways without regard to the main point which in my opinion was 'how much they were to be built for, what they were to cost, and what returns were likely to be on the capital cost of same'. It is disgraceful economically that the railway at Lagos should ever have to be supported out of the revenue of the country. As for the Sierra Leone Mountain Railway, I looked upon that as an official piece of waste from the beginning, greatly to the offence of Mr. Ellis Edwards - - -"³

In order to prove that it was mainly because of the carrying trade in railway materials that Jones advocated immediate and general building of railways in West Africa, Holt investigated the rates which Jones charged. When it was known that the shipping company directed by Jones charged as much as 45 shillings per ton, Holt cynically

1. Holt to Morel, 5 Aug. 1904, F8/2 EDMP.

2. Ibid.

3. Holt to Morel, 13 June 1910; F8/4, EDMP.
Ellis Edwards was a Member of Parliament, friendly with A.L. Jones.

remarked: "well may certain people agitate for the building of railways anyhow and anywhere in our West African Colony -" He was surprised at the "fools at the head of our affairs" who were "willing to pay these ridiculous rates." He castigated the current system of abuse in the same letter to Morel:

"Rates of freight above ordinary market rates are to that extent a robbery of the Colonies who pay them. From a national point of view it is a wrong policy to support a monopolistic line of steamers combining with foreigners to keep up rates of freight and by their nefarious rebate system put one of the greatest obstacles ever invented for keeping out any opposition. The Government ought to set an example in this matter and if need be put on their own steamers to carry their own stuff, and those of other people who are at the mercy of these monopolists. They have the power to ruin anybody who likes to act at all independently; they can refuse to carry his goods; they can charge him differential rates; they can allow rebates to other people in (whose business) he does not participate. It is all very well to talk about freedom of contract, but there can be no freedom of contract under modern conditions, where the carrying has been monopolised by what is practically a trust".¹

He advised Morel to make members of Parliament follow up ^{matter} the/persistently to get at more facts and inform the country. Since he knew that it was practical businessmen who would understand "the game that was going on", Holt exhorted Morel to bring businessmen in Parliament to see how detrimental it was to the West African Colonies that these high rates were paid by the Government. ²

1. Holt to Morel, 7 Nov. 1906, F8/3, EDMP.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The attitude of many Members of Parliament was already very critical of the Crown Agents and its railway operations. On 6 March 1903, William O'Doherty had told the Commons that he was disturbed by the information which he received that the firm of Shelford and Sons were given commission "on the cost of the railways lately built, or at present under construction in West Africa"; even an official denial of this rumour could not dispel doubts many members entertained on these transactions.¹ Thus in March of the following year, the Earl of Portsmouth, while probing the efficiency of the Crown Agents, made the most critical examination of their railway construction in West Africa. He pointed out that the Ashanti Railway, literally built by the Crown Agents, which was estimated to cost £8,000 a mile, actually cost £13,000 a mile; and since the distance of the railway was practically 100 miles, he found that the difference between the estimate and the cost approximated to £500,000. Portsmouth told the Lords that a group of well-known South African contractors, Pauling and Company,² had built/tropical railways in

1. HC Debs.45.Vol.119.1903.5.

O'Doherty, William, M.P.(Nationalist)North Donegal 1901.Born at Carndonagh, Co.Donegal.1868. Educated at St.Columbus'Coll. Londonderry. Admitted a solicitor 1893; Member of Londonderry Corporation from 1896; Chairman Public Health Committee. Lived in Londonderry. Clubs: Reform and National Liberal. Died 18 May 1905.

2. This Company had alarmed the British public when it published in the Times that it had offered to build the Uganda Railway for less than half the cost of its

portions of Portuguese East Africa where the climatic and physical conditions were of the same character as obtained in Ashanti, at an average cost of £5000 per mile. He maintained that "not only has this Ashanti railway been expensively constructed, but I am informed by those who are thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of the case that it is badly constructed and that it can barely keep up a speed of ten miles an hour". Quoting a letter which the African Trade Section of the London Chamber of Commerce had written to the Colonial Secretary, in which that section had pointed out that the cost of the Ashanti Railway had far exceeded the original estimate, and that if the construction had "been put to tender and given to a contractor, it would have cost very much less, been built more quickly, and generally given greater satisfaction," Portsmouth emphasized the importance of efficiency in imperial as well as domestic operations:

"I do not think that sufficient weight is given, from time to time, to the fact that we are obliged by our Imperial position to be expending these large sums of money in the development of our Empire. But if this expenditure is so badly and extravagantly administered and we have to impose heavy rates, naturally the result is that industrial development is most seriously checked. I have heard it said, but I do not know how far it is true, that the

2 continued from previous page

construction by the British Government. This firm also "offered to build the West African Railways but were burked by the Permanents". Holt therefore tearfully exclaimed in this same letter to Morel, "How can we get these rascally doings inquired into and exposed. These vampires are sucking the life-blood of our Colonies --" Holt to Morel, 20 Dec 1902, F8/2, EDMP.

development of Africa is seriously affected by a shipping trust, by high railway rates, and by other commercial facts which ought not to exist, but which do have the result of enormously increasing the cost of living to the white man, and of seriously interfering with industrial development. I think this question of the Ashanti Railway is one which, in itself, could justify an independent inquiry into the Crown Agents' Office".¹

On the same day, Earl Grey had also referred to the Ashanti Railway as "the most glaring instance of extravagant railway construction." According to Grey, since it took the Crown Agents three and half years to build 40 miles, at an average cost of £15000 a mile, "the people interested in the development of West Africa were so distressed" with the slow rate of construction and the extravagant cost, that they approached an outside contractor - Messrs. Pauling - who undertook to build the remaining distance at £6,650 a mile. Earl Grey lamented that "the Government refused the offer made by this responsible firm of contractors - who were prepared to give H.M's Government any guarantee they wanted, and who have built over 2,000 miles of railway in South Africa - "²

On 10 June of the same year, the Earl of Portsmouth produced new evidence to prove his earlier allegations. Accusing Shelford and Company "of making one of the most

1. H.L. Debs. 45 Vol. CXXX. 1904; 948.

2. H.L. Debs. 45. Vol.CXXX. 1904, 956-7.

notoriously bad lines that has ever been made," Portsmouth read to the Lords a letter from a certain M.G. Lowe described as a gentleman of great experience living at Sekondi, to support his charge of incompetence. But it is his analysis of the personal relationship of the Crown Agents and the Colonial officials that was most revealing. Alleging that the Colonial Office permanent officials were "not a check upon the Crown Agents", Portsmouth pointed out that "there exists in a most curious and remarkable degree a sort of family party in the Crown Agents' Department and the Colonial Office". Portsmouth declared:

"The Permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies is Sir Montague Ommaney. Mr. Ommaney, a nephew of Sir Montague Ommaney, is a member of a firm of solicitors who are solicitors to the Crown Agents. Mr. Shelford, who constructed the precious and costly line - - is son-in-law to Sir Montague Ommaney, and is himself a member of the firm of Messrs. Shelford, who are also the consulting engineers to the Crown Agents. If I may say so, that is rather like a comic opera of Gilbert and Sullivan. First of all, the work of the Crown Agents is handed over to delegated constructors selected by them, and then they are paid besides for the duty of reporting on their own work. That seems to me to be a condition of things which in the public interest is quite indefensible, and I think it certainly should be carefully and fully inquired into - - -"

As has been indicated, Portsmouth's motion of that year was not carried; but parliamentary pressure for an inquiry into the Crown Agents' system of railway construction

in West Africa persisted.

This allegation of extravagance would seem to have worried those who raised or advanced the required funds for the railways. The Lagos railway up to Ibadan had been constructed at an enormous cost of over £1 million from loans advanced from the Imperial Treasury using the revenues of the Lagos Government as guarantee.

Chamberlain and MacGregor were in favour of its extension with further imperial funds. Thus when in August 1901 Chamberlain told the Treasury that new railway surveys were taking place with a view to extending the Ibadan line, he had tried to procure the necessary required funds by emphasising that the new railway affected "Imperial as well as local interests."¹ But the Treasury, now smarting under the scathing criticism of squandermania, replied that "no such work ought to be undertaken until the finances of Northern Nigeria, either by improvement in its own revenue, or by largely increased contributions from Southern Nigeria and Lagos, are in a vastly different position."² The Treasury was so hostile to the request from the Colonial Office that even Lyttleton desired to experiment with construction by "contract" in any new lines

1. CO to Treasury, 27 Aug 1901, CO 147/158.

2. Treasury to CO. 10 Sept. 1901, CO 147/158.

that might be contemplated.¹ When in March 1904 the Colonial Office asked the Treasury to guarantee a loan of £1million which Lagos wanted to raise for the extension of the Ibadan line to Oshogbo, the 'Gladstonian garrison' doubted the need for such an extension and did not think that the current state of affairs made it advisable "for any of the Colonies to raise money for the purposes of capital expenditure."² It may, perhaps, be apposite to point out that the Treasury had by this view probably invaded the legitimate grounds of the Colonial Office. Whatever might have been its traditional attitude to Colonial Office expenditure, it is hardly tenable to argue that it was the Treasury's business to determine when it was most appropriate for any colonial scheme to be launched. In the event, however, by itself, Lagos floated the loan for the extension of the line to Oshogbo.

Apart from the Treasury's opposition, it should be noted that even Chamberlain himself was not really very keen on the extension of the Lagos line at that time, although the Lagos Governor had pressed him to approach the Treasury for guarantees. He had declined to ask Parliament either for a further loan from the Imperial exchequer or for an imperial guarantee for such a loan

1. CO to Treasury, draft. 15 March 1904, CO 147/169.

2. Treasury to CO. 26 March 1904, CO 147/167.

for the Lagos Colony, but had rather adopted an administrative process. It seems that he hesitated to ask Parliament for funds either because he felt that the extension of the Railway was not urgent or because he might have wanted to experiment with construction by 'contract' since the 'departmental' or Crown Agents' system was then under heavy parliamentary attack.¹ His failure to confront Parliament could be explained from his views on the Northern Nigerian Railway costs. In November 1902, he had told Lady Lugard that the British public now opposed "too rapid progress," having been disillusioned by "the slow progress and the enormous cost of the Uganda Railway." He seems to have agreed with Holt when he at the same time suggested that "until the promise of trade is more evident than can be expected at present it would be difficult to obtain a grant for any very large undertaking which would appear to people in this country to be speculative."² Moreover, the notion at that time that taxation in Britain was "high" would have made it inopportune to ask for a large sum for railways even three years after.³

1. See Minute by P.H. Ezekeil on MacGregor to Lyttleton 10 Jan 1904, CO 147/169.
Also CO to Treasury, draft, 15 March 1904, CO147/169.
Minute of June 1903, by J.C. a Manchester C/C to C.O.
26 June 1903, CO 147/168.
2. Chamberlain to Lady Lugard, 20 Nov.1902, Lugard Papers, Brit.Emp. MSS. S.62.
3. Chamberlain to Sir. F.D. Lugard, 22 March 1905, 30 May 1905, *ibid.*

Thus Chamberlain's reluctance to ask Parliament to intervene (although it indicated the difficulties which probably subdued his enthusiasm) was merely a reflection of Treasury opposition and the hostile mood of the country. For the Colonial Office, apart from these difficulties, was still enthusiastic about railways, and merely waited for an opportune moment to carry them through. Although the Colonial Office was severely attacked in Parliament for extravagance, and although that office became very uneasy about public attitude to railways since Uganda, yet the King's Speech of February 1904 referred to Imperial cotton supply and people like Sir Alfred Jones (whose ability was cherished by King Edward VII¹) knew the this reference to cotton and railways went together.² Hopes began to be cherished also that an extension of the Lagos Railway would lead to development of Northern Nigeria, and thus lessen the imperial funds it frequently received;³ and in an effort to prepare the way for this development Governor Egerton had advised European trades in the South to open new stores in Northern Nigeria.

1. King Edward VII is supposed to have said, "if I had four men like Alfred Jones always at my side I could rule the whole Empire single-handed".
Vide P.N. Davies, op.cit.
2. Minutes by Strachey, R.L. Antrobus, Ommaney on MacGregor to C.O., 10 Jan 1904. CO 147/167.
3. CO to Treasury, draft 15 March 1904, CO 147/169.

But the most compelling factor which ultimately carried the day was the anxiety then expressed by many people over the Railway programme in French West Africa, especially Dahomey. In 1901 while opening the Lagos railway to public traffic, Governor MacGregor had broached this problem. But the Colonial Office at that time treated the idea of French competition with polite slight. When, however, an article appeared¹ in a French journal claiming that if the Dahomey railway came up to Tchaourou, the French would then be in a position to divert Lagos trade, the Colonial Office was alarmed since unless the Lagos railway was extended, the French might also divert a great portion of the trade of Northern Nigeria which had passed to Lagos by a route near the Anglo-French frontier on the West.²

The question of further extension of the Ibadan line to meet this French challenge, however, remained a matter of mere academic minutes until July 1906 when Winston Churchill's strong memorandum determined policy. Churchill started his long submission by emphasising the necessity of extending the Lagos Railway to Jebba since Southern

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1. See the Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée of Jan 1904. Extracts referred to by Strachey in MacGregor to C.O., 10 Jan. 1904, CO 147/169.
 2. CO to Treasury draft, 15 March 1904, CO 147/169.

Nigeria (now amalgamated) could raise loans on its own security. Suggesting that any plan for a railway in the Eastern zone of Nigeria must be for future consideration, he supported the Baro-Zaria project which Lugard had proposed, since they were "for strategic, administrative and development purposes". He magnified the imminence of the threat the extension of the French railway from Dahomey to Say implied; it would mean, he said, tapping off the trade of the Hausa States. He was of the opinion that such a railway would have a good strategic value for they would enable troops to hold that portectorate for a longer time than would be the case. And since there was a likelihood of local trade and greater production of cotton resulting from this railway, Churchill concluded that these necessities justified the application of imperial funds.¹ In this adoption of this policy, Sir Alfred Jones had played a tremendous part either by his incessant and publicised cotton dinners where he extolled the necessity of railways as an imperial priority or by his personal transactions with Cabinet ministers, in particular, Lord Crew^e and Winston Churchill with whom he maintained very close ties.²

1. CO 879/93: Memo by W.S. Churchill, July 1906.
Also see African (West) No.850.

2. Churchill had attended some of these dinners and had paid glowing tributes to Alfred Jones.

To all these arguments Holt was opposed. He had looked upon the idea of rivalry between the British and the French in regard to the Niger Railway as merely artificial because, as he said, "there is no rivalry whatever". He was of the opinion that Britain would not take French trade there "because of our railway to the Niger, nor will they take British trade if they get there before us, which is very likely." He felt that British steamers up the Niger could be used to carry both goods and produce at much less rate than the French railway was likely to charge (forgetting that the Niger was only seasonably navigable); But "if they get any trade at the head of their railway from British territory, they ought to be welcome to it, as it will be a trade which is not diverged from any other place of ours."¹ Holt disagreed with all the arguments of MacGregor and Morel that the railway at Ibadan should be extended to the Niger, resting his opposition now mainly on economic grounds:

"Railways ,we all agree, are advisable wherever they can be constructed with a fair prospect of an adequate return on the capital employed; that is my first proposition, and I cannot go beyond it, unless you take me to political grounds which I do not understand - - - If we cannot make the railway to Ibadan pay fair interest on the capital invested, we are incapable of doing it anywhere - - - -"

1. Holt to Morel, 22 April 1903, F8/2, EDMP.
This indicates that the Third Party were well aware of the French threat argument ever before it exercised the minds of the C.O.

"I believe in people paying their way as they can, and not putting off to some future date, and upon some future people the burdens that belong to us. If the railway from Ibadan is justified, we ought to have no difficulty in finding the necessary funds to construct it, but it must be done on commonsense lines, and the jobbery that characterizes the present line must be avoided - - -"1

When finally the scheme for the extension of the Railway to the Niger and the construction of the Northern Nigerian line was decided upon and Elder Dempster and Company was once more favoured with carrying the constructional materials, Holt's pessimism was mournful:

"I am afraid Jones has got on the right side of Winston Churchill, and the Niger Railway will be all the more costly in consequence. Why are not these officials honest or why are they such fools? Anybody but a rogue would advertise for tender to carry the railway material to Baro and Jebba just as they advertised for tenders for the supply of the material itself and made public the price at which the contract were placed. Why are they not equally honest about freight - - -"2

The construction of the Northern Nigerian lines by the P.W.D greatly decreased the cost in comparison with the Lagos-Ibadan railway, but the opinion was general that this cost might have been lower still if Jones's shipping company had not had the monopoly of freight. Thus when Trigge, who had just become a Director of the Niger Company, fixed up a contract with Elder Dempster for the carriage

1. Holt to Morel, 22 April 1903, F8/2, EDMP.
2. Holt to Morel, 11 Feb. 1908, F8/3, EDMP.

of some 30,000 tons of Railway material, to the Niger, Holt's grumbling reflected the angry mood of Parliamentary critics of the Colonial Office which apparently was unimpressed by the plea for public tender:

"Antrobus is not altering the system of hole and corner - contract by which many thousands of pounds of public money are being given away annually in sheer muddle. Why are these things not put up honestly to public tender? It doesn't seem to matter if it be Marlborough, Churchill or Seeley, the same sheer idiotic waste of money goes on. Either these men are incompetent or worse - which is it? - - -1

Before and after the construction of the Northern Nigerian line, parliamentary criticism seemed to have supported these grumblings of John Holt. On 19 November 1906, before the decision was taken to construct the Northern Nigerian line, H. de R. Walker, Member for Leiscestershire, ^{had} tried in the Commons to dissuade Churchill from giving its construction to the Crown Agents, in view of the excessive expenditure of other railways they had built.² The following day, Sir William Holland, member

1. Holt to Morel, 13 Feb 190, F8/4, EDMP.

2. HC. Debs.4s.Vol.165.; Nov 1906; 385
Walker, Henry de Rosenback, B.A.; born 30 May 1867 Son of R.F. Walker of Shooter's Hill, Kent and Marie von Ronsenback of Karritz, Esthonia, Russia. Educ. at Winchester and Trinity Coll. Cambridge; clerk in F.O. 1889-92; Contested N.W. Suffok (Liberal) 1895; Plymouth 1900; M.P. (Liberal) Melton Div. Liestershire, 1906-10; elected to L.C.C. for East St. Pancras, 1913. Travelled in various parts of the world. Published works on the Empire. Died 31 July 1923.

for Yorkshire, had implied criticism of the construction of railways so far in West Africa when he forced Churchill to issue a detailed table of costs and expenditure.¹

Criticism of the Crown Agents and their West African railways construction continued well till the Commission of Enquiry of 1908 into the administration of the Crown Agents;² But members of Parliament persisted in probing railway cost even after. On 23 August 1909, L. Ginnell, an Irish member, barely failed to foister upon Colonel Seeley the "arduous task" of stating the gross expenditure on railways and other engineering works in each of the Crown Colonies and protectorates "for the last twenty years", and "the amount of it spend under the Departmental control and under contract after public tender respectively."³ On 18 October of the same year, the same Ginnell while alleging "dishonesty" in the Crown Agents' operations, implied that he had a proof for this when he asked Colonel Seeley to state "the net cash profit, as distinguished from patronage and other consequential advantages, derived by the Crown Agents from each and all of the railways

1. HC. Debs. 4s, Vol. 165; 1906; 598.

2. See Report, P.P. 1909 (Cd.4473), Evidence, P.P. 1909 (Cd.4474). Also Abbott, op.cit. P.30.

3. HC. Debs 5s Vol.IX; 1909; 1923-4. Ginnell, Laurence, B.L. M.P.(Nationalist) N.Westmeath, native county since 1906; Barrister of Middle Temple and also of King's Inn, Dublin, Born 1854; 3rd son of Laurence Ginnell; self-educated. One of the founders of the Irish Literary Society, London. Publications: Brehon Laws, 1894, Doubtful Grant to Ireland, 1899; Land and Liberty, 1908. Died 17 April 1923.

constructed under their control during the last twenty years."¹ Criticisms continued ranging from high freight rates to the Crown Agents' "mysterious" operations; from the dubious relationship between Jones' Shipping Company and the Crown Agents' to general charges of extravagance in the financial management of the West African Colonies.² Thus on 5 July 1910, Joseph King forced Colonel Seeley to deny the charge that construction of railways in Southern Nigeria was not proceeding economically and satisfactorily! especially in view of a recent report of the auditor that it was no exaggeration to say that thousands of pounds worth of material had been lost to the Government³. Yet these criticisms continued.

One direct result of these criticisms was that people who had supported the construction of these railways began to question the motives of the noisiest and most energetic among the railway party. Although Morel had begun to attack the Shipping monopoly of Alfred Jones, he did not immediately discern that basic in Jones' enthusiasm for railway construction in West Africa was his monopoly of carrying the constructional materials. He had been one of those who rightly saw railways as tropical

1. HC Debs 5s Vol.XII. 1909, 101, 103.

2. Cf S. Buxton's allegations; HC Debs.4s.Vol.132; 1904, 939-401.

3. HC Debs 5s. Vol.XVIII, July 1910; 1494.

desiderata. But now the facts were becoming overwhelming and Holt's importunity almost irresistible. Holt's revelations removed the scales from Morel's eyes:

"I am afraid in those days I was not very familiar with the financial aspect of the question. I rather took Jones' view, that railways should be built anyhow, so long as they were built at all, to keep out the French from the hinterland. I have learnt wisdom ever since!"¹

Comment on this may mar the picture of self-interest that is clearly presented.

If comment on motives is superfluous, an analysis of charges made by humanitarians and other critics of the government is most essential. It is pretty obvious that Holt and other critics greatly exaggerated the financial position of the Colonies and the uneconomical operations of the railways. At the same time they never took into consideration other factors which affected the economical administration of some of these railways. Also an examination of the finances of the Lagos administration, for example, will show that their mournful charge of colonial indebtedness was magnified.

Even before the railway construction, the Lagos administration was not even nearly as prosperous as the Southern Nigeria protectorate; but the railway movement had accentuated this difference. For example

1. Morel to Holt, 1 July 1910. 18/7, JHP.

between 1900 and 1904 when Southern Nigeria had contributed £162,750 to maintain the impecunious Northern Nigeria administration, Lagos had donated nothing.¹ It is possible that much of this reluctance to contribute was influenced by MacGregor's dislike of Northern Nigeria; one feels, however, ^{that} the involvement of the Lagos administration in huge railway expenditure was greatly responsible. It is estimated that apart from the loans of over £1 million floated up to March 1903, the Lagos Government had spent a sum of £139,381 between 1898 and 1903.² Notwithstanding these staggering railway costs, the Lagos Government might be said to have had some reserves (although it must be noted that these were probably not real reserves). Although there was a deficit of £30,498 in 1899, by 1903 a balance of revenue over expenditure of £93,463 was reported (although this did not include administrative expenses on running the railways). Again, an "unaudited" balance for the financial year till March 1904 stood at £27,002 according to official reports. These figures might indicate that the charge of colonial bankruptcy which the Third Party often made was not always true. But it should, at the same time, be noted that these reports did not always say everything; sometimes a phrase such as

1. C.O. to MacGregor, draft, 27 May 1903, CO 167/165.

2. See C.O. 147/165.
Also Tamuno, op.cit.

"less expenses on the railway", might have all the facts behind it. Moreover, the humanitarian charge that some of these official figures were "manipulated"¹ to justify the necessity of development in face of public criticism of extravagance, is something which though it is difficult to prove, yet might have elements of truth.

If the railway revenues for Lagos are examined, it will be seen also that the humanitarians were not always wrong, though they expected too much. For example, the revenue derived from the Lagos railway for the period 1901 to 1902 was £17,898 against an expenditure of £21,640; thus it is clear that there was a deficit of £3,742. But between 1902 and 1903, the financial position was better; a revenue of £45,961 against an expenditure of £33,795 meant a balance of £12,166. By March 1904, that is the first quarter of 1904, another credit balance of £4,608 was realised.² One feels, therefore, that although revenue from railways was not large, the figures at least belie the extreme views expressed by critics that the whole thing was run at a loss, (allowing for the charge of "manipulation"). But when the huge loans which were put into the railways are taken into account^{and} compared with

1. Kingsley, Holt and Morel, between themselves, always accused the colonial officials and the C.O. of 'manipulating' the figures so as to give false impressions to public and parliament!

2. C.O. 147/165.

the very little revenue¹ derived, it seems that the strong views expressed by Holt and others were not totally unjustified. Moreover, it does not seem that the Railway had begun to pay the cost of the loans (i.e. interest on capital). At least, ^{in view of} the fact that it concentrated at the early stages on mere working expenses, it could be argued that profits from Lagos railway should have been able to finance its extension to the Niger, as Holt pointed out.

But there were other political and economic factors which adversely affected railway revenues. The Colonial Government always felt it was a part of its benign duty to charge low freight rates on the railways, hoping that this "high policy" would indirectly induce other benefits via general economic development of the area. Thus if the Lagos railway charges on public merchandise within the first six months of 1903 were as high as on the Gold Coast, the Lagos Railway might have trebled its revenue for that period.¹ On the other hand, water competition between Abeokuta and Ibadan reduced railway revenue.² Apart from these considerations, the Lagos Government probably did not expect large revenue from such a short distance unless the rates were increased which it declined

1. Moseley to C.O., conf. 5 May 1904, CO 147/170

2. Ibid.

to do. The Government anticipated that, like the Indian Railway, the Lagos one would make profits with further extension.¹

From the expressed views of several members of Parliament, who supported Holt's suspicions, there is every indication that there was corruption, incompetence and patronage in these transactions; that high salaries were not always commensurate with the slow pace of development; and that waste might have been avoided. But whatever the shortcomings in detail of colonial policy, the point surely was that for the first time the British Government was moving to equip these colonies with basic communications and other services in order to create conditions in which those services could pay for themselves. To entirely adopt Holt's ideas, which were truly Gladstonian, would probably have delayed for a long time many needed economic advances. Yet in giving credit to the greater foresight behind the aims of the British Government in West Africa, there is a certain amount of plausibility in the Third Party argument than an economic policy which was already undermined by a corrupt, inefficient and extravagant administrative machinery would never achieve true Imperial ideals.

1. Moseley to C.O., conf. 5 May 1904, CO 147/170.

Apart from abuses intrinsically connected with the Crown Agents' mode of operation and waste in financial administration of the Colonies which was alleged, it was the shipping system between Britain and West Africa which was most venomously attacked. An examination of ^{the effect} this shipping monopoly on the economy of the West African colonies is, therefore, most necessary in assessing the merits of humanitarian grievances.

Before the arrival of Sir Alfred Jones in the West African shipping scene, there seems to have existed no monopoly in the carrying trade. Merchants trading to that part had carried their goods in their own ships. When in the 1850's steamships replaced sailing vessels and it was discovered that most merchants could not afford the large capital required to operate a shipping line, two interests emerged - the shippers and ship-owners. As early as 1852, MacGregor Laird had operated the first steamship line, the African Steamship Company, between Britain and West Africa, followed by a second line, the British and African Steam Navigation Company, formed in Glasgow in 1869, but managed by two Scotsmen, Alexander Elder and John Dempster through the agency, Elder Dempster and Company, which the latter men had formed in Liverpool. The two shipping lines competed between themselves for

West African cargo, though gradually they arrived at a mutual time-table agreement. When in 1879, Alfred Jones, formerly a ship's broker, joined the firm of Elder Dempster and Company, as a partner, he showed remarkable industry; and by 1890 when he mysteriously became its chairman, he had practically brought the two shipping lines under his management. Through a process which assured him a financial control of the two firms, Jones by 1900 "held a virtual monopoly of the West African Trade".¹

But this implied a monopoly of only the trade between Britain and West Africa for another shipping firm, the Woermann Line of Hamburg, virtually monopolised the important trade between North-Western Europe and West Africa. Founded in 1837, this merchant house specialised in the trade of West Africa. When Germany acquired colonies in West Africa, this line was mainly supported by the trade which existed between Germany and these Colonies,

1. See Charlotte Leubuscher, The West African Shipping Trade 1909-1959, (1963) Pp. 3-15 for details of the history of West African shipping.
See also P.N. Davies, Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade (Unpublished Liverpool M.A. thesis)
Leonard Fay, Elder Dempster Lines Ltd (Liverpool, 1948)
Note also that John Holt had acquired an ocean-going vessel for his Company in 1908. Vide John Holt and Company Ltd, Merchant Adventure, P.22

but was gradually involved in the trade of other West African territories, particularly that of Lagos. Towards the end of the 19th century, this firm competed vigorously with the firm of Elder Dempster; but in 1894 they came to an agreement/^{and} thus inaugurated the first West African Shipping Conference. It was a shipping ring which shared the available freight between its members while adopting a ferocious method against parties which might try to disrupt the system.¹

Common to most shipping rings ^{were} ~~was~~ what ^{were} ~~was~~ called 'rebates'. In order to secure a high load for their ships and to prevent shippers from transferring their custom to outside lines, shipping conferences usually compelled shippers to accept conditions under which they pledged to use exclusively conference ships. The chief means for enforcing this condition was "the deferred rebate system". By this a shipper could claim a discount, usually 10% of the freight, if he had shipped exclusively with conference ships during the 'account' period and a further 'deferment' period. In the West African system, the 'account' period was six months to which another six months' deferment was added. Thus shippers were tied to the Conference, and part of their capital was tied up with the shipping firms for about a year. This deferment

^{op.cit.}
1. C. Leubuscher, / Pp. 13-15.

period ensured that shippers could not break away without losing their claim to the rebate, for at least six months. Moreover, 'loyalty' to the ring 'required the shippers not only to withhold cargo from outside lines, but also to refrain from the chartering of tramps'.¹ Thus a shipping line like Elder Dempster and Company acquired an interest free loan to the tune of about 10% of their annual freight receipts from shippers.²

At the same time the British lines and the German line were guided by other decisions they arrived at when the conference was launched. Although the two British firms under Jones were allowed to call at continental ports, the Woermann ^{line} was not allowed into British ports. Also by putting the direct freight rate from New York to West Africa at the same level as that charged from Liverpool to West Africa, the Conference protected itself against a possible American competition, though this led to ^{the} circuitous process of carrying cargo from America to Liverpool and thence to West Africa. This process embittered British merchants who were forced by the conference to ship via this route, whereas other American firms shipped direct to West Africa at cheaper costs and sold American goods there at cheaper prices. Between 1900 and the first world war, therefore, this shipping

1. C. Leubuscher, P.17.

2. P.N. Davies, op.cit. Pp 111-3.

conference was attacked both by merchant shippers who suffered under the system and others who saw in its details, a situation inimical to the economic interests of both Britain and the West African Colonies.¹

The most obtrusively prominent fact about the specially onerous features of the West African Shipping Conference was the abnormally high freight rates between Britain and West Africa. The merchants who were most directly affected by this state of affairs had grumbled and complained, but had apparently succumbed to it. Gradually, however, when public and parliamentary criticisms were systematically directed against the alleged financial maladministration of the Colonies, people began to probe into the effects of these abnormally high freights on the development of West Africa. Although merchants like John Holt (who had over £10,000 at a time tied up with Elder Dempsters by way of deferred rebate) complained and tried to counter this system, it was E.D. Morel who brought the issue to the notice of the British public and parliament when he openly stigmatised the operations of the shipping system:

(Ibid. p. 637)

1. Ibid, Pp. 112-3.

reasoning logically and economically, the rate to Bathurst should have been between 11s.3d and 15s per ton (unless there were other factors to be considered, like buying expensive coal, after Las Palmas, which was not the case). The reason why this rate was as high as 45s per ton at Bathurst was that no other regular British vessel visited Bathurst. Other British steamships regularly visited Las Palmas and carried cargo at moderate rates. But where the "monopoly" of the Conference shipping started, competition apparently ceased, and high rates prevailed, Morel lamented the state of affairs which had brought about the sudden jump in rates:

"Opportunity - is responsible for the unequal and unfair penalisation of West African commerce. Immediately ^{competition} ceased, fair treatment ceased and monopoly began, and with monopoly came an anarchic annihilation of the laws of legitimate barter, an abridgement of commercial rights, a destruction of that concrete level of equality from which are conducted equitable bargains and mutually beneficial business transactions. The present position of the West African shipowner is somewhat analogous with that of the man possessing a well-stocked larder in a besieged famine-stricken city: he alone has bread and he will make his fellow-citizens pay for it at ten times its value, or else they must starve -"¹

But in order fully to understand the operations of this shipping system, the rates from Bathurst to the Niger

(P.T.O. 619)

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1. West African Mail, 14 Dec 1906. These rates were based on Morel's account. It seems he derived them from Lloyd's Register; but with his experience in the employ of A.L. Jones, we can believe they were accurate.

- "The Shipping Company which monopolises the carrying trade between Great Britain and West Africa is a singular one. It has an individuality and a reputation quite its own: in many respects both are unenviable. By virtue of its monopolist position, its rates of freight inward and outward are greater, intrinsically and comparatively, than that of any other regular line of ocean service.
- "It forces merchant, trader and Government to pay prices practically cent per cent over the actual commercial value of the carrying service rendered, at the same time refusing, modo et forma, to be in any way responsible for delay, damage, destruction or loss suffered by goods in its charge.
- "In practice it shows a complete disregard for, and lack of interest in, the requirements and development of British trade and native industries, unless such regard and interest can be exercised at some immediate or ultimate advantage to itself. It professes a strong Imperialistic policy, whilst it subsidises, in effect, foreign industries and penalises British ones, and makes its Government pay huge rates of freight on the thousands of tons of material shipped for railways and public works.
- "It professes a commendable desire and anxiety to assist in the progress and development of the native African, and puts this desire into work by making him pay heavily for carrying his goods to him and taking back to European markets the results of his labour and the products of his land - - - - -"1

Although Morel's severe criticisms of Jones' interests were a reaction to the latter's hostility to the Congo Reform Association, they were not really unfounded. The charge that the freight rates were capricious and excessive could be both illustrated and explained. From Liverpool to Las Palmas, the rate was between 7s.6d and 10s per ton; and from Liverpool to Bathurst between 25s and 45s per ton. But since Liverpool to Las Palmas is about two-thirds the distance from Liverpool to Bathurst,

Delta must be examined. From Bathurst to Cotonou, and all the intervening ports, it was possible in those days to discharge cargo at Bathurst rate. However, from Cotonou to the Niger Delta ports (i.e. Sapele, Warri, Buguma, Degema) the rate dropped to between 21s.3d and 33s9d; even along the coasts of the Niger Delta proper, it dropped further to between 21s.3d and 27s.6d per ton. But from these ports to Rio del Rey and Victoria the rates once more went up and stabilised between 27s.6d to 50s per ton. The reason why the rates to the Delta ports were reduced so much below the normally high rates which obtained at other ports was that Jones was playing for safety. In the immense trading area tapped by these rivers there existed several large merchant trading companies, sufficiently powerful, if constrained by unbearable economic oppression, to combine and run a steamship line of their own, and probably disrupt the hold of the Conference line in other areas. The most outstanding of these companies were the Niger Company, Miller Brothers and John Holt. Although there was mutual trade suspicions between them, yet they had also made secret agreements with the shipping firms to reduce rates in their favour in order to share the market between themselves and so keep newcomers out of the trade of

these ports. But the merchant firms were never totally satisfied with the shipping arrangement. In the 1890s plans for setting up a rival line of their own were discussed by the Liverpool merchants, especially the African Association then led by Holt and George Miller, but these fell through. Jones played a divisive role within this Association, skilfully kept the members apart in order to prevent their establishing a line operated by them, and succeeded in discrediting Holt's leadership of this Association. When Holt resigned as leader of the African Association, the way was open for Jones to manipulate others into supporting his line.¹ But he was always afraid that these merchants might combine against him at any time; with the result that while he used his rebate system to keep them in subjection, he withheld his hand in the Niger Delta where too severe treatment might induce the richer merchants to combine. Apart from Lagos, where special and natural difficulties probably justified the high rates, freight rates in other West African ports were disproportionately high. But since none of the comparatively small merchants who shared in the trade of these other areas had sufficient at stake to justify the formation of an independent shipping movement, they

1. See Davies, *op.cit.* Pp.64-102 for the details of these combinations.

succumbed to the stranglehold of Conference shipping.¹

Although Alfred Jones used economic discretion to quieten some of his powerful opponents while containing the grumbling of the smaller ones, other factors forced the shipping arrangements once more into the open. Critics of the monopoly enjoyed by Jones began to point out that the simultaneous holding by him of the chairmanship of Elder Dempster and Company and the Presidentship of the BCGA put him in an ambiguous position. They alleged that this combination of function was responsible for the high rates charged for the transportation of West African cotton, his interests (as a shipowner) in high rates outweighing his desire to encourage cotton growing in West Africa. Although as has been indicated the cotton industry in West Africa suffered from other misfortunes, this charge was not untrue. It is true that when the BCGA commenced experiments in the cultivation of cotton in West Africa, Elder Dempster and Co., in response to the generous gesture by the Lagos Railway to carry cotton free of charge, had also generously offered to ship cotton to Britain free of charge for a period of two years, as a practical demonstration of their sympathy for a movement which would benefit the cotton trade of the Empire.

1. Leubuscher, op.cit., Pp 27-28.
West African Mail, 10 Jan 1907

It may be ungracious to comment adversely on this act of self-sacrifice; but as Morel, however, pointed out, one is constrained to suggest that since the amount of cotton shipped during the first two years of the infancy of the cotton growing movement was naturally comparatively small, the shipping company could afford the "free" period, after which they charged double rates until they recouped themselves from any temporary loss occasioned by this act of ostensible abnegation. For Elder Dempster and Company and their German allies to combine and charge the BCGA a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d per lb when it was known that $\frac{1}{8}$ d per lb would be a fair return (still to allow American cotton the advantage of being delivered in British markets at the cheapest price) tends to show that the initial act of generosity was but a shadow bereft of all substance. The subsequent high charges retarded the progress of the cotton movement in Northern Nigeria, and probably helped to kill it in many areas in the South.¹

If the lot of the BCGA (and other fantastic rates paid for transporting coal and railway materials) do not give full enough proof of alleged abuses, the most revealing illustration of what Morel has called the "superficial philanthropy" which Alfred Jones always proclaimed was

1. WAM, 14 Dec 1906.

Also Davies, op.cit., Pp 157-161.

the very high rates, by the West African Colonies for articles of food,¹ in particular, salt. As an organic necessity, salt was, and has been, one of the greatest needs of the African. "It is so essential," said Morel, "that he (the African) has even proceeded to the extent of bartering his own flesh and blood in order to obtain it." In order to understand how the rate charged for this necessary commodity by Elder Dempster compared with the rates charged in other countries where monopoly was non-existent, a glance at the following list is startling:

Rates of Freight on Salt from Liverpool to:

<u>Countries</u>	<u>Shillings per ton</u>
West African Ports (by E.D. & Co.)	20s to 30s
Calcutta (including Suez Canal dues)	4s.6d
Savannah, (Georgia)	4s
Halifax, Nova Scotia	5s
Seattle	10s.6d
Quebec	5s.6d
Buenos Aires	15s
Mauritius	15s
The Cape	15s (2)

Comment on these figures would be superfluous were it not for the fact that the full implications of this excessive rate must be examined.

If the transit rate on this single commodity alone had been within reasonable ratio of its real market value,

1. e.g. the rate for rice and flour from Liverpool to West Africa was between 30s and 35s a ton by Elder Dempster lines, as against 7/6d from Liverpool to New York.

2. WAM, 1 Feb 1907 for this table.

Also see Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on Shipping Rings, P.P (1909) (d.4670, XLVII), pp 165-173 .

thousands of pounds would have been saved to each of the West African Colonies, and an essential physical requirement would have been delivered to the native markets at a much cheaper price. This would have meant not only that the natives would have benefitted individually and collectively by having a vital necessity supplied to them, but also the consequent supplemented demand would probably have increased the magnitude of the African trade and source of revenue. For example, during the years 1904, 1905 and 1906, about 150,000 tons of salt were imported into West Africa from Liverpool alone, not to mention that which was imported from the continent. Had the freight rate upon this quantity been at ten shillings per ton (still leaving the price much higher than the rates to Calcutta, Savannah, Halifax and Quebec,) a sum of £75,000 would have been left for other purposes, and yet the shipowner would have been adequately remunerated for his services. Morel summarized the effect of this high rate on the economic development of West Africa:

"In three years, upon one article of trade alone, has been literally given away to a private monopoly a sum of money sufficient to build 25 miles of light railway! The whole of the West Coast ports, each of which taps a considerable trading area, are afflicted to a varying extent with the penalizations of the present system of ocean carriage."¹

1. WAM, 1 Feb 1907.

It would, therefore, "be exceedingly difficult for the shipping company which controlled the carrying trade between Great Britain and West Africa to substantiate any claim to having given impetus to the progressive trend of West African commercial and colonial development with any other object than that of securing huge considerable pecuniary advantage to itself"¹ These facts, which are eye-opening, would tempt one to the conclusion that the proposed policy of Imperialism so often announced by Alfred Jones was one which, as Morel truly pointed out, failed to agree with the creed of trusteeship which was the ideal British policy.

This is proved more convincingly by pointing at the high freight rate charged on some other items at the port of Lagos. Although Lagos was particularly unfortunate in having exceptional natural difficulties which had necessitated the use of small fleet of light-draught branch boats for transshipping cargo across the bar before its modern harbour was constructed, this handicap was probably of smaller importance than the principal one regarding the huge amount which was annually taken from the Colony by the Shipping Company under Sir Alfred Jones. This is best illustrated by the table below:

1. WAM, 1 Feb 1907.

Freight Cost on some items of Export in Lagos for 1904 & 1905

Description	Tonnage	1904		1905	
		Rate per ton	o a cost of freight	Tonnage	o al cost freight
Palm Oil	14,225	40s	£28,450	12,348	£24,696
Kernels	59,318	30s	£88,977	45,176	£67,764
Cocoa	322	45s	£724	296	£666
Cotton	385	47s.1d	£905	570	£1,340
Cotton seed	430	20s (approx)	£967	699	£1,548
Coffee	5	45s	£11	36½	£82
Rubber	118½	55s	£326	119	£327
Corn (Maize)	4,688	20s	£4,688	9,384	£9,384
Total	79,491½		£125,048	68,628½	£105,807.

From this table it is seen that the total tonnage for the two years was 148,120; and the total cost of freight for the two years was £230,855. It was held by Holt, who knew the mysteries of the West African trade, and by Morel, who had been in the employ of A.L. Jones, that the equitable rate for these commodities should never have exceeded 22s 6d per ton. This means that the total cost for the above tonnage should have been about £166,635; thus the shipping company had charged £64,220 in excess for the two years alone,¹

1. WAM, 1 Feb 1907.

It is, therefore, clear that upon only eight principal exports from one port alone in two years only, a sum of £64,220 had been given away to monopoly above the legitimate market value of ocean carriage. As the imports were rated equally high, it would then be reasonable to suppose that the total rate on the whole imported goods would amount to about a similar sum (probably more), making altogether, in regard to Lagos alone, a total of about £128,400 extra charge in two years' There can be no doubt that a large portion of the profits made by Elder Dempster and Company were used to re-equip their fleet and to improve services generally.¹ But it is no exaggeration to say that between 1904 and 1905 alone, Lagos had been robbed of a sum of money more than equal to cover the cost of her projected harbour works which were then estimated to cost the Colony about £125,000. If West Africa had been blessed with competitive shipping systems, the amount of money which would have been saved to the Colonies between 1895 and 1907 would have more than sufficed to meet the outlay necessary to equip them with necessary railways without resorting to imperial loans with interests. Morel who always watched the operation of this shipping system with the insight he had previously gained into Jones' business, described "the whole history of the present monopoly" as "an object lesson in legalised

1. Davies, op.cit.

oppression, shewing to what extent extortion can be profitably practised upon a community."¹

Morel also pointed out in the African Mail that another effect of the West African Shipping Conference was that it operated more favourably to the Woermann and German trade than to British interests. Morel's opinion was that the differential rates between Liverpool and Hamburg respectively, to West Africa not merely subsidised foreign goods but actually penalised British commerce. For example while the rate on normal items of trade from Liverpool to the Niger Delta ports varied between 27s.6d and 33s.9d per ton (exclusive of 10% primage), that from Hamburg to these ports never exceeded 21s.3d per ton. These figures indicate that the British shipping company could in effect allow a subsidy of between 6s.3d and 12s.6d per ton to continental manufacturers upon goods shipped to British West African ports from Hamburg. And since Elder Dempster lines were allowed into German ports by the terms of the Conference agreement with Woermann Company, it would seem therefore that the British company had arranged with a foreign firm to generally penalise British commerce for its own individual advantage. One would, therefore, agree with Morel and Holt that the "sublime patriotism" which Sir Alfred Jones always preached was apparently a sham.²

1. WAM, 1 Feb. 1907.

2. WAM, 16 Nov. 1906, 7 Dec 1906.

As has been shown, parliamentary criticisms of the Crown Agents by people like the Earl of Portsmouth, Earl Grey and Austin Taylor had also included the shipping system.¹ Gradually, however, members of parliament began to show special interest in the high rates of freight charged and in particular criticised the preferential treatment the West African Shipping Conference gave to goods shipped at Hamburg. Complaints from the Colonies against the shipping system were so incessant that in 1906 the Colonial Office thought of employing charter steamers. But it acquiesced in the existing arrangement, since, as it claimed, good steamers were not available.² Although the West African Shipping Conference was merely a small aspect of the several shipping rings established in the world, complaints had been spasmodically lodged against "those within the British Empire that in 1906, the Liberal Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the operation of these Shipping Rings. The appointment of this Commission was due almost entirely to pressure from the Governments of Australia, South Africa and the Straits Settlements (three of which most bitterly resented the existing system), but it gave those interested in West African

1. H.L. Debs. 4s. Vol. CXXX, 1904, 948.
H.C. Debs. 4s. Vol.132, 1904, 936.

2. CO to CA, 27 June 1906, CO 147/79
Also Egerton to Elgin, 21 Jan 1907, Minutes by Butler
14th March 1907, CO 520/43.

reform an opportunity to air their/^{own}grievances.¹

Morel did not give evidence before the Commission, but he persistently continued the attack on the shipping monopoly, lobbying members of parliament and supplying them with commercial intelligence for parliamentary questions. Towards the end of 1906, Morel declared in the African Mail:

"It is absolutely imperative to the interests of West African trade and the progressive development of the West African Colonies, that a competition shall be set up in its shipping, and every support accorded to it. It is an absolute commercial and politic necessity. Competition has always been fundamentally necessary to development. Monopoly is a cosmic deformity. It is an enemy of progress - - -"²

The evidence of John Holt before the Shipping Commission confirmed almost every criticism which Morel and others had been making on the effects of the West African Shipping system on the development of the Colonies and on British commerce. In order to prove his case, for example, Holt produced figures to show that between 1896 and 1904 he had gradually paid more to the German line than the British line for shipment of his goods. Apart from the lower rates charged by the continental line, Holt was also of the opinion that it was better managed and organised than Elder Dempster

1. Vide C. Leubuscher, op.cit. Pp 13-15.

2. WAM, 16 Nov. 1906
See also VAM, 7 Dec. 1906.

and Company.¹

Although small merchants like Zochonis, and Hutton, in their evidence, supported the operations of the Shipping ring, other highly-placed witnesses testified to the bad effects of the system in the West African Colonies. Sir Walter Egerton, Governor of Southern Nigeria, fiercely and bitterly condemned "the extraordinary position taken up by Sir Alfred Jones that the Crown Agents are principals and not agents" - a position which involved all four West African Colonies in the loss of their rebates if for example the Crown Agents arranged for one of them to charter a steamer for the transportation of material.² The Governor of the Gold Coast in a written statement condemned "the present shipping monopoly" as "an unmitigated evil."³ In spite of these charges, however, the Commission did not report against the system. Although differences of opinion among its members led the Commission into producing a minority and majority report,⁴ it was clear that so far

1. Holt told the Commission that in 1896 he had paid a total of £23,693 to the British lines and £4,714 to the German, but by 1904 he had paid £16,521 to the British line, while the payment to the German line had increased to £12,573.

2. Cd. 4670, P.411.

3. P.P. (1909) Cd. 4669, XLVII, P.196.

4. Report of the Royal Commission on Shipping Rings. P.P. (1909) Cd. 4668, XLVII.

It has been pointed out that Alfred Jones' evidence given in camera 'had a considerable influence on the conclusions reached by the commission'. See A.G. Hopkins, op.cit. P.328 ff.

as Alfred Jones was alive there could be no effective challenge to his monopoly. Even after his death in 1909, no serious opposition threatened his company's shipping sway, till the first world war. Permanent officials in the Colonial Office and even the Crown Agents Department at times tried to "emancipate" themselves from "Elder Dempsters' freight monopoly",¹ but they feared the political power which Jones had with Ministers of the Crown, and the various Crown Agents. The attitude adopted by Lord Elgin in April 1907 when he suspended all attempts being made by the Colonial Office to counter the shipping monopoly of Jones,² might have reflected his growing confidence in the Shipping Commission; but it represented one of those repeated political interventions which ensured the monopoly of Jones against the itching but diffident criticism by the permanent officials.³

1. CA to CO, 12 June 1897, CO 147/122.

2. Minute of 24 April 1907 on Egerton to Elgin, 31 March 1907, CO 520/44.

3. For example, in March 1909, a conference between the Crown Agents, the Colonial Office and the Royal Mint decided to end the existing monopoly of banking and supplying of specie to West Africa enjoyed by the BBWA (led by A.L. Jones) by transferring control over the supply to the Mint, and thus treating the BBWA and the Bank of Nigeria as equals. However, Lord Crewe, after verbal representations from Sir A.L. Jones and the supporters of his bank, curiously reversed the unanimous opinion of his officials, and allowed the existing situation to continue.
Minute by Crewe, 28 Aug. 1909, on Coke to Hopwood, 15 Aug. 1909, CO 520/88.
Also discussed by A.G. Hopkins, *op.cit.* P.231-232.

Having tried almost every expedient to undermine the various monopolies held by Jones and apparently failed, the Third Party was virtually powerless. Articles in the African Mail, lobbying of members of Parliament and personal interviews with friendly officials had brought these private attitudes towards West Africa to national recognition; but they were substantially futile to remedy the system then in vogue. With nothing now left except a sober hope in the future of West Africa, they found unity in pessimism. A doleful lampoon, written in the 1890s, yet summarised their mood and attitude at this time:

"This huge combination of ships, cash and stations,
The long-suffering Shareholders find,
Beget but omissions, re trade and inflations,
To which they've been stupidly blind.

Imperial bluster, assertions and brag
Have served very well for a while
But the dividends go to the shipowners' bag
Not to traders in nuts and palm oil,
How long, Oh Lord! how long."¹

1. This poem is not dated and is anonymous. But it appears it was written in the 1890s, probably by Holt himself; 6/6. JHP.

CONCLUSION

In spite of its perpetually doleful appeals to Providence, the Third Party was incomparably the most effective humanitarian sect during the period covered by this study. Since Mary Kingsley's abortive scheme, this small band of devoted guardians sought to influence British imperial thought at a time when humanitarianism was generally in decline. Originally conceived as a traders' lobby, this 'family compact' progressively became the most dynamic humanitarian pressure-group at the time.

Holt became the pater familias of the Third Party, but his dynamism was more instinctive, more psychologically disposed, than physically bound. He was almost always followed by the shadow of an agonising infirmity and when this physical failing is squared with his innate dislike of display and self-advertisement, his 'back-room' direction of events is more discernible. He was candid and public-spirited, but he was at the same time too cynical of the motives of men and governments, and tended to romanticise the irrecoverable past. At times, personal issues also obscured the real merits of his sincere advocacy, but if John Holt had been more robust and less embarrassed by his dual commitment, he might have translated his buoyant idealism and honest zeal into a much greater public crusade.

Morel was destined to fulfill this public effort. His ubiquitous advocacy was a movement. He had the vital qualities for leading a cause: capacity for prolonged effort which made it possible for him to reconcile his West African work with the demands of the Congo Reform Association, and a single mind which inoculated him against unnecessary doubts when his fortunes were low. His personal relations with the officials, with Members of Parliament, with editors of newspapers, made him an inestimable asset to his school. But it was his own editorial power, his vast and incisive knowledge of African affairs, not to mention his sincerity and honesty, that added significance to the movement that became synonymous with his name. At times, however, he took extreme views of issues. Moreover, lack of financial independence necessarily undermined the sanctity of his ideals, while an instance of political expediency threatened them. But apart from the destined commitment of the Third Party to the cause of enlightened commerce, he was both a sincere advocate and a critic of experience. After the death of Holt, and with the Lands Committee Report in 1915, Morel became more interested in international issues related to the war, during which he was imprisoned for an indiscreet role. On his release, however, he remained radically devoted to his Union of Democratic Control on which platform he was elected to Parliament for Dundee in 1922. But before he could prove

his parliamentary mettle, he fell sheer. He died abruptly in 1924.

Politically, the Third Party was uncompulsive. They began as disheartened Gladstonians, always solicitous of the demands of the 'Garrison'. But old idols were at that time being challenged by new myths. These new tendencies in the national politics were reflected within the Third Party itself. Whereas the old-fashioned liberalism of Kingsley and Holt had bordered on reactionary conservatism, Morel was to direct this legacy to a radicalism that was poised between liberalism, socialism, and conservatism. Experience of social misery at home had influenced him and his fellow radicals to guard against similar tendencies in the colonies. He, therefore, sought, via a land settlement, to provide for the greater multitude in West Africa; but in so doing he adopted a rigid formula of conservatism called Indirect Rule which was not liberally disposed towards the aspirations of the educated natives, who, it must be noted, were themselves too committed to selfish and elitist interests. Handicapped by the sublime opportunism of the B.C.G.A and the Chamber of Commerce men, the humanitarian bankruptcy of the African Society, and the apathy of the general public, the Third Party was nevertheless aided by a Quaker alliance in William Cadbury, the wayward gusto of Josiah Wedgwood, the stray radicalism of Charles Dilke and Cathcart Wason, and the

practical force of Mrs. Green. What united them was that humanitarian idealism which they felt was the necessary bulwark of imperial policy.

Although it was older and more professional in the field of humanitarian agitation, Exeter Hall was at this time progressively in decline. In spite of Fox Bourne's sincere zeal, the traditional loyalty of the Buxtons, the indomitable spirit of other Quaker clans, and the amalgamation itself, the two societies could not be transformed into a movement immediately responsive to the new imperial situation. Wohn Harris was pre-eminent because he was the most progressive and far-sighted of the later humanitarians. He saw the ultimate political destiny of the West African peoples which others could neither see nor regard as important at that time. Morel and a few other radicals tended to see this also, but they emphasised the economic destiny, not the political. Devoted, steadfast and courageous, Harris brought a balanced mind to bear on the problems of the new empire in West Africa. A man of considerable energy, his spirit, like Morel's and Noel Buxton's, was not merely national but cosmopolitan. He gave vigour and efficiency to the amalgamated society, but, like Fox Bourne, he could not translate his society into an organisation more directly effective at the Colonial Office. At a time when public meetings provoked the cynicisms of many who might have regarded them as an attempt to shock the

sensitivity of normal human beings, John Harris should have realised that cordial private relationship with the officials was probably more rewarding.

In spite of John Harris, therefore, Exeter Hall remained irrevocably conventional. Traditionally and sentimentally attached to the humanitarian cause, members, most of whom were at this time very old, attended Society meetings, heard colonial information, and passed resolutions. A deputation might follow, but in most cases letters to the Colonial Office embodied these views. Except in very rare instances, these letters did not always try to go beyond ethic statements (which the Colonial Office might claim it knew as well); they were not always detailed, and not very urbane. The operational tactics of the Society thus reflected an attitude both intellectually and psychologically unprepared for the problems of the new empire. Almost barren of new ideas, which demanded a thorough grasp of economic principles, Exeter Hall continued to harp on the early Christian ideals. Justice, humanity and charity still struggled with slavery and temperance as in the traditional order. Always on the defensive, it could not, for example, create such a situation as the West African Land Question, which as a Society it almost compromised. It sincerely criticised the injustice alleged done to West Africans at the time, but it was relatively ignorant of the details of colonial administration; not even

the administrative malpractices which Morel was daily pointing out to the Colonial Office seriously affected this imperturbable attachment of Exeter Hall to traditional causes. As always, members were prone to be sentimental: they at times gave credibility to untested and unrationalised colonial information. They were given political support particularly by mature and advanced liberals like G.P. Gooch, Gilbert Murray, Herbert Samuel and the Buxtons, but backed in strength by the Quaker clans. They were largely a disinterested sect, though one feels that these devoted guardians found a 'profession' in humanitarian agitation and tended to magnify colonial calamities in order to justify their own existence. They were sincere and religiously inspired men who although they were ready to point at the superficiality of educated African pretensions, were, unlike Morel, at the same time willing to pander to his conceit.

Thus although Exeter Hall represented a continuity of that moral policy traditionally associated with British politics, it made no great direct impact on official policy at this time. Its parliamentary basis was widened by non-party commitment, but it is clear that most parliamentary members were primarily fighting their party wars. Moreover, the Colonial Office files make several uncomplimentary remarks about the two Societies, and only vague and distant references to features in the Aborigines' Friend and the

Anti-Slavery Reporter. This compares badly with detailed minutes that would follow a penetrating editorial in the African Mail which was both superior in material content and journalistic integrity. Again, at a time when Morel had sincere friends in Charles Strachey and Alfred Emmott, and was sometimes listened to by Antrobus, Lord Crewe and Lewis Harcourt, the officials were ill-disposed to associate the Colonial Office with 'any schemes' proposed by Exeter Hall. Occasionally, however, the Society met successes but these were exceptions, not the norm. If, as Mary Kingsley said, Holt was worth ten Aborigines' Protection Society men, Morel was probably worth the whole Exeter Hall at this time.

But the relative position of the two sects should not obscure the fact that as a humanitarian force both were not directly influential. However, the officials were willing to listen to Morel in the land question, the Colonial Office did not wish to share power with any extraneous body, be it the Third Party or Exeter Hall. The failure by that Office to change the various systems criticised by the Third Party shows the limit of their own influence. Indirectly, however, they both influenced that Office. Their eternal vigilance, publications, question in Parliament, memorials, official deputations and personal influence, led the Colonial Office into anticipating humanitarian grievances, and thus imperceptibly provided Colonial rule with a humanitarian conscience.

The influence of the humanitarians on the public cannot be easily assessed. But of all things, the most difficult to change is a public attitude. It is probable that things could not remain exactly as they had been; yet public attitudes were substantially unchanged by humanitarian action. Individually, the results of the crusade were varied. Sir Alfred Jones at his death left a very substantial sum of money for West African education; it was probably intended to redeem him from Morel's strictures. But Sir William Lever was later to refurbish his notorious project into another 'imperial' scheme; this shows that the old predatory commercial instincts were not yet vanquished. In the last resort, the humanitarian contribution cannot exactly be measured by concrete achievements, but in terms of ideals. They emphasised the morality of Imperialism and thus helped in the evolution of the ideal of Imperial Trusteeship.

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APPENDIX

THE SIERRA LEONE HUT-TAX

The Third Party opposed the Hut-Tax because, as they alleged, taxation was contrary to native law and native sentiment, because it discriminated against the people of the Protectorate, and because it was recklessly enforced. But they emphasised the fact that it was historically unjustified and inequitable:

"Looking at the historical relation in which the Protectorate chiefs stood towards the British Government as represented by the Sierra Leone Administration, it would seem very questionable whether Britain had the right to force a Hut-Tax upon the natives of the Protectorate at the point of the bayonet. The Protectorate has never been conquered by Great Britain, which would have given her a prima facie right of taxation over its inhabitants. The country was ceded to Great Britain at various times by the Chiefs - acting as independent contracting Powers - on a friendly basis of mutual advantage, principally founded upon the development of trade and commerce...."

From Morel, E.D,

The Sierra Leone Hut-Tax Disturbances :
A Reply to Mr. Stephen (Liverpool, 1899)
 p.6.